T*he* AMERICAN REVIEW

VOLUME FOUR NUMBER TWO

DECEMBER 1934

The College, the Individual, and Society

NORMAN FOERSTER

[*An address delivered at the inauguration of Gordon Keith Chalmers as president of Rockford College, Illinois, October 10, 1934.*]

M*r. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:* At any great moment in the history of a nation or of an institution, the minds of men instinctively turn to the past for spiritual forces that can be revived and projected into the future. The inauguration of a new, young president in an institution as old as Rockford College is, I think, such an occasion.

At all times the future is vague and inchoate. It takes on meaning and familiar warmth only when we put into it the images of things known and cherished, those elements in our heritage and experience which seem worthy of preservation and new life. What those elements may be, in the tradition of this College, is for you to say – students and faculty, Mr. President and trustees, alumnae and friends. It is your College. All I can do is to give you my own opinion, my prediction of what you will desire, as time goes on, to make of the College.

It has been a liberal institution, concerned with the development of free human beings, a place where young women could enter fully into their humanity. But increasingly, since the war, liberalism, whether political or educational, has been in decline. The importance of personality is being forgotten; the general drift has been towards communism and the totalitarian state. We are in danger of so emphasizing the concept of society that we cannot remember the concept of the individual. We are in a way to becoming like the thrifty Scot who bought only one spur. He argued that if he could get one side of the horse to move, the other side would have to move, too. We shall discover, I venture to say, that we need two spurs, if there is to be any real progress: the spur of society and the spur of the individual. We need social organization to give expression to common activities and aspirations; but we also need individuals who are worth organizing.

In our own country the importance of individual personality is still recognized and protected in three ways. It is guarded by religion – by no means all religion, however, since many of our churches have become little more than organs of social aspiration. It is guarded by the law of the land, though it must be confessed that the relation between the Constitution and our actual government procedure is at present unsatisfactory. And it is guarded by our colleges of liberal arts, though they again have fallen into some confusion. I am here concerned, naturally, with the last of these – the liberal college in her traditional rôle of Alma Mater, caring for each of her children separately.

In the years leading to the depression, this traditional rôle of the college conflicted with the gospel of education of which Dr. Charles W. Eliot, long President of Harvard University, was the most influential spokesman. His slogan was Education for Power and Service. It was a slogan that matched well the materialistic and sentimental spirit of the times. In a business civilization built upon applied science, it became natural for students to attend universities in order to learn something that they could "sell". Did not all men, in truth, earn their livelihood by selling their power, their skill, their knowledge, their ideals? Sell all that thou hast, and thou shalt make plenty of money. Hence arose, particularly in the state universities, vast department stores of courses aiming directly at increase of power: courses in poultry problems and advertising problems, in spray mixtures and shorthand, in ice cream and advanced dressmaking, in sewerage and upholstery, in business English and social case work. Indeed, the number of ways of getting on in the world seemed endless. Power over nature, power over one's fellow men, power over everything but one's self.

At the same time the whole process could be thought of as dignified and idealistic by remembering that taking part in the work of the world was a service to the community. Even serving ice cream was service. Yours for Service. The educated man or woman became a servant of society; education itself became servile, rather than liberal. Aside from specific services there was always, in addition, the sentiment of human brotherhood, the expansive love of mankind in the mass, a pleasant emotion that served to ease one's conscience without interfering with business. In actual practice, power and service tended to become greed and slush.

Today, serving men by exploiting them seems a little old-fashioned. It is not profitable to exploit people who have little or nothing. . . . Individualism having failed, we are now to go in for collectivism. At the least, we need a new deal; the new cards may be better than the old, if we are lucky. At the most, we need some sort of socialism, communism, or fascism. Advanced idealists are telling us that making a profit is committing a crime, and that having private property is an unpardonable sin against the holy ghost of society. Secretary Wallace himself, not satisfied with a new deal, wants a new frontier, and even more: he looks, as he says, to "the land *beyond* the new frontier", and that land will be conquered, he tells us, "by the continuous social inventions of men whose hearts are free from bitterness, prejudice, hatred, greed, and fear". How these men are to be found and put into authority he does not make very plain. I am afraid that Mr. Wallace has not adequately wrestled with the realistic conclusion of Aristotle that the problems that beset society are always fundamentally due to "the wickedness of human nature". However, we are well supplied today with educationists who assure us that they can change human nature, if we will but give them enough power – for example, the authors of a recent book entitled *The Educational Frontier*, most of them professors in Teachers College, Columbia, disciples of John Dewey and Karl Marx. They tell us that when human nature has been remade, we shall all delight in serving everybody else; we shall all be happy cogs in the world machine, the world beehive, and nobody will want to sting anybody else, because everybody will be secure and appreciated. But in that day, I fear, we shall have the slave state, and education will be, in the fullest sense, servile.

If that day should ever arrive, obviously there will be no colleges for men or for women alone, obviously there will be no liberal colleges of any sort. The truth of the matter is, I think, that the liberal college is, with the whole force of its tradition, conservative, out of sympathy with all the extremist tendencies of the present century. Before the depression, it is true, a number of liberal colleges were somewhat warped by the pursuit of Power and Service, but on the whole they succeeded well in maintaining standards, showing a genuine concern for the quality of their students, the quality of their curriculum, the quality of their teachers. They kept the faith, and they are still keeping it. They put, and are still putting, first things first. If it is suggested that the liberal colleges are out of touch with modern needs, they may well reply that they are serving modern needs more soundly than many other institutions. Nobody knows what turn events will take in the next ten or twenty years. Already it seems strange that, only seventeen years ago, Woodrow Wilson was rallying the spiritual forces of mankind to the final conquest of the world by democracy. We do not know what lies ahead. Perhaps the future will deal more kindly with an institution that places first things first than with one that adopts a passing fashion. Perhaps it will turn out that the liberal college is intimately in touch with modern needs. Perhaps there are *permanent* values in her tradition, which is spiritual rather than materialistic, humanistic rather than humanitarian.

For the tradition of a liberal college like Rockford goes back to the beginning of the modern world, to the Renaissance, when a humanist like Vergerius announced: "We call those studies *liberal* which are worthy of a free man; those studies by which we attain and practice virtue and wisdom; that education which calls forth, trains, and develops those highest gifts of body and mind which ennoble men." In words of our own day we may find the same doctrine in Whitehead, who says: "Wisdom is the fruit of a balanced development. It is this balanced growth of individuality which it should be the aim of education to secure." Today, as in the Renaissance, a humanistic or liberal education is concerned with making free, not warped men and women; with emphasizing wisdom, rather than efficiency; with the excellent, not the average; with selection in all things, not indiscrimination and aimlessness; with personal values far more than with social mechanisms. At its best it attempted, in the Renaissance, to unite in the student the clear intelligence of the Greeks and the reverent character of Christianity, so that the tradition of the liberal college goes back, ultimately, to ancient Greece and Judea. Indeed, it may be said, roughly speaking, that education was humanistic and Christian from the early Middle Ages down to the eighteenth century. That I will call the old dispensation.

In the eighteenth century the old dispensation, humanistic and religious, which had so long guided men's lives, broke down under the attacks of the new dispensation, which was humanitarian and scientific. This meant a sharp shift of emphasis from the quality of human living to the quantity of favourable conditions in the environment. It meant a shift from the inner life to outer circumstances. It meant a turning to material advantages, and a widening distribution of them, so that at last none might suffer pain or want. It meant that if you sought first the kingdom of material prosperity, all other things would be added unto you.

Because I believe that the humanitarian movement is our chief obstacle to genuine recovery in society and education, I shall try to make the nature of the movement clearer by interpreting its history, especially since that history has never been written.

When the old dispensation was fading away in the eighteenth century, materialism was growing apace. As materialism developed, it was accompanied by humanitarianism, by a deep aversion from physical pain and deprivation. It drew support from the new sense philosophy of the school of Locke and the new scientific conception of the world as a vast machine. A new view of man and nature arose, which released a new set of feelings. Clearly, the mainspring of these feelings was secular, not religious. In France, indeed, humanitarianism was definitely a revolt *against* the Church, against the horrors committed in the name of Christianity; it was sceptical, it was finally atheistic. Church and Crown alike were denounced and an abolishment of misery demanded. This was not because suffering was increasing; actually, it was diminishing. What was increasing was simply the consciousness of it, and the feeling, induced by the materialistic world-view, that suffering was intolerable.

In England, the situation was different. The yoke of both Church and Crown had long been broken, and economic liberty had been developing. In England, consequently, the humanitarian impulse sought other forms of expression. The prisons, slavery, the treatment of the insane, cruel sports, outrageous punishments, especially capital punishment for trivial offences — old abuses such as these were now regarded with a new sensitiveness.

How is this new attitude in England to be explained? How are we to account for an attitude that pronounced intolerable practices which earlier times had approved and even enjoyed? It was not the rise of Evangelical religion, since this had no parallel in France. No, the humanitarian movement was not a matter of spiritual activity, but of mere feeling.

There had been plenty of benevolence, as early as the Middle Ages; but you will note one striking difference. In the Middle Ages, kindness and sympathy might be enjoined as a moral duty, but there was none of the instinctive repugnance to *bodily* suffering that is so marked in the eighteenth century and later. On the contrary, the mortification of the flesh was held to be praiseworthy, torture was allowed by common consent, and burning at the stake was regarded with positive satisfaction. Not that such things are desirable. But it is clear that when humane and enlightened men could endure and approve such sights, the valuation of physical pain in the Middle Ages, the great ages of Christianity, was quite different from our own.

I do not see how we can avoid what may appear a startling conclusion. In its origin, humanitarianism was, I venture to assert, primarily a manifestation of materialism. It was not in harmony with the retreating

53841

forces of religion and humanism; it was part and parcel of the new emphasis on outer nature and the physical benefits promised by the Industrial Revolution. It called for freedom, but it meant nothing so certainly as it meant freedom from *physical* suffering. Freedom from physical suffering is a good thing, but it is not the best. Relatively to ethical and spiritual values it is not important. No great civilization ever made this its dominant preoccupation. If previous ages had emphasized proportionate living, or the welfare of the soul, or the development of personality, the humanitarian movement now emphasized the claims of the body. It stirred appetite rather than virtue. Desires increased, things increased with which these desires could be satisfied; and men became more and more enmeshed in desires and things.

For the realization of what deprivation means grows naturally as the standard of comfort rises. We know from common experience that this is so. No one is so acutely aware of the least speck of dirt as the cleanest housewife; the slattern is indifferent. Till more or less recent times all the world was more or less slatternly; the glory that was Greece, the grandeur that was Rome, the lofty aspiration that was mediaeval Europe, the magnificence of the Renaissance, all the ages in which man has given the noblest manifestations of his capacities, *all* of them could be cast into shame by any of our "progressive" civilizations of today. Beside Chicago, or Denver, or Seattle, what is old Athens, or Rome, or London, or Florence, *if* the criterion be that of cleanliness, efficiency, and comfort? We are trying to get rid of the slums that came in, as we conceive, along with the Industrial Revolution and modern capitalism. But what came in with the new order was simply the consciousness of bad housing and the desire to improve unwholesome conditions of living. Now, a slum does not consist, as most people seem to suppose, in a multitude of flimsy or crowded houses with dingy exteriors, but simply in unwholesome conditions of living, and until rather recently all the world lived in slums because no one knew any better. The numberless material advantages that we owe to utilitarian science had not yet been discovered; in fact, there was not any great desire to discover them.

According to Lecky, the modern expansion of sympathies and softening of manners is due to the progress of civilization. If civilization be defined as *material* organization, Lecky was right. The greater the ease of life, the keener is the sensitiveness to hardship. Notwithstanding all our material organization, there is in the world today a vast amount of very real hardship, which no man can behold without profound concern. Hunger and cold, ignorance and depression, in the midst of abundance, demand relief; they also reveal something amiss in the very foundations of our materialistic and humanitarian programme. We are told, from time to time, that the economic depression is good for us; that it is making people think; that wisdom will issue from it. This is at present our great hope, and it may not be baseless. And yet, for myself, I confess I see few signs of the sort of thinking and wisdom that could animate society with a new purpose. I regard fascism, communism, and sundry other popular tendencies and movements of the day merely as advanced symptoms of the materialistic disease from which society is suffering. We show few signs of any real conversion. The greatest happiness of the greatest number still means, for the bulk of our society, the attainment of a maximum material prosperity. What more really counts for us? A wit has defined a depression as "a period when people do without things their parents never had". People are terribly reluctant to do without automobiles, one of the natural and inalienable rights of modern man – a most depressing privation to a society that can walk only on golf links. We are a coddled people. If we are displaying a growing softness of the heart, may it not be because we are experiencing a growing softness of the body and nerves? Certainly people used to make little of bodily suffering which they could not stand at all today, such as floggings of five hundred lashes, or operations without anaesthetics. I do not recommend such suffering, for myself or others; I am simply affirming that a civilization based upon the avoidance of suffering is an empty and hollow affair. Some years ago the question was raised why medical men were tending to usurp the influence that formerly belonged to the clergy. "The obvious reply", someone has suggested, "is that men once lived in the fear of God, whereas now they live in the fear of microbes."

In the seventeenth century, the last of the religious and humanistic centuries, before the humanitarian movement got under way, men did not worry much over microbes, or calories, or violet rays, or thermostats, or ice-cubes, or the pains of walking, or the evils of inhibition as revealed by the new psychology. The seventeenth century was a great religious century, the time of Pascal and Milton and Sir Thomas Browne. As a physician, Browne had a due perception of the importance of physical things, but he did not confuse physical and spiritual in our modern way, or consider that the physical came first. I know of no better answer to the material-minded humanitarian than is contained in a few words of Browne's famous book. Here are the words: "I give no alms only to satisfy the hunger of my brother, but to fulfil and accomplish the Will and Command of my God; I draw not my purse for his sake that demands it, but His that enjoined it; I relieve no man upon the Rhetorick of his miseries, nor to content mine own commiserating disposition." Today we have changed all that. We prize our commiserating disposition; we are glad to listen to the rhetoric of miseries, and to relieve them because they are miseries. We believe in comfort, but it is not *spiritual* comfort; we believe in service, but it is not the *service of God* through care for his children.

Clearly, the new dispensation is quite different from the old. Humanitarianism begins with the social environment; the old humanism and religion began with the individual person. The new view assumes that society is responsible for the ills of the world; the old, that the individual is at fault. The one wants to reform society; the other wants the individual to reform himself. Now, the notion that society is responsible goes back to the early days of humanitarianism, when Rousseau, for example, made his inflammatory declaration that man is good by nature, but that he has been corrupted by social institutions. Change the institutions, and all will be well. This was the programme of the French Revolution; it did not work; it has been tried in gradual stages ever since, but has not worked; the Russians are trying it again in wholesale fashion.

Revolutionists and evolutionists alike assume that the heart of the problem of civilization lies in the *mechanism* of society; once that is right, you will have good citizens. They consequently refuse to hold the individual responsible for our present social chaos. Thus, Theodore Dreiser, who has latterly gone communist, tried to show, in his *American Tragedy*, how the pressures of an unsound society finally led a well-intentioned young man to murder and the electric chair. Criminals, outlaws, prostitutes, and murderers, naturally good and beautiful souls, brought to do evil by the pressures of wrong social ideals and institutions, are indeed the staple out of which countless recent novels, plays, and motion pictures have been made. To this notion that the individual is not in the least responsible for his actions much force has been lent by a popularization of flimsy psychologies celebrating self-expression and deprecating self-restraint.

For two hundred years – the span covered thus far by humanitarianism – the individual has seen fit to "pass the buck", if I may use a favoured way of putting it, to society. Before that, the "wisdom of the ages", if I may use a phrase generally derided today, held the individual responsible for what he did. To Jesus, for example – he was once a potent example – sin was sin, he did not prate about social pressures, he simply said, "Sin no more", demanding an inner reform. To Buddha, the gravest of vices was moral indolence, following the line of least resistance, and the supreme virtue was spiritual strenuousness, the exertion of an inner check upon desire. This has been the pronouncement of all the great religions of the world. And with this pronouncement the tradition of humanism has always been in agreement, as witness Aristotle and Horace, Erasmus and Milton, Goethe and Arnold, Emerson and Irving Babbitt.

To Aristotle, for instance, happiness is not the product of a good environment but the result of ethical work. Happiness comes of self-mastery, and self-mastery comes of self-discipline, the tempering of the will. Instead of calling for a sudden regeneration through faith, Aristotle calls for a gradual conversion through right habit. While goodness, he says, is not natural, we "are naturally capable of receiving it and we attain our full development by habituation". This is exactly the view of the great Chinese humanist, Confucius.

The old humanism and religion alike held that the true dualism is never that of the individual at war with society, but that of the individual at war with himself — a conflict between a natural self and an ethical or spiritual self. This inner dualism is, to be sure, not in fashion today. Science is supposed to have shown that man has only one self; that he is only an animal, a little smarter than the rest. The philosophy behind the humanitarian movement takes no stock in the divided self, or in the freedom of the human will. This philosophy, like others, will pass. Intellectually, we can never hope to solve the old, old problem of the freedom of the will. But while it has never been settled intellectually, it has always been settled practically. In practice, in the daily conduct of life, we still continue, like all our ancestors, to assume freedom of choice. It is a demand that our human nature makes upon us. It tends to produce order in our lives and in our relations with our fellows. To this extent, all men are humanistic or religious, whatever they may profess.

We must begin somewhere, in thought and life; we must begin either with the individual or with society. The alternatives are as plain as those which Jesus held forth between worldliness and other-worldliness. To the worldling, Jesus says in all plainness that religion has nothing to do with the world. The great primary law of religion is: Love the Lord thy God. We may be sure that Jesus would make short shrift of the humanitarianism that abounds in our churches today, where this great primary commandment has no vital or intelligible meaning, and where one hears interminably of the second commandment: Love thy neighbour as thyself. Torn from its context, isolated from the primary commandment that was intended to define its meaning, this secondary commandment has been transformed into a sanction for the loyalty of a pack of wolves, and for a materialistic programme working in beautiful harmony with applied science for the physical well-being of humanity. Let us not delude ourselves. If we want a worldly way of life, let us frankly adopt it, and not dress our materialism in the trappings of the spirit. If we want religion, on the other hand, let us turn first to its primary law, and then proceed to restore the religious meanings of the words we have degraded, "service", "comfort", "brotherhood". For myself, I confess that I shall see nothing but a menace in this modern humanitarian movement which so many noble minds have hailed with hope, until the time comes when men can say, without a trace of cant: "I give no alms only to satisfy the hunger of my brother, but to fulfil and accomplish the Will and Command of my God."

That time is not yet in sight; though a great religious age may well lie in the remoter future. The time may eventually come when, as Irving Babbitt suggested, men will have to turn to the Roman Catholic Church as the only institution capable of preserving civilization. Meanwhile what is available for those who cannot attain to that or any other unsentimental religion?

I know of nothing better than the dualistic humanism which Irving Babbitt set forth with great learning and critical power. This is something very different from the so-called humanism that has invaded some of our American churches, which is, as Dr. Haydon concedes, a form of naturalism and therefore, I think, a complete betrayal of religion. The humanism of Babbitt is not a proud modernistic philosophy based on natural science, but simply the latest form of that old dispensation of which I have spoken. It is a critical re-appraisal of the old traditions of religion and humanism which men cast overboard so hastily in the eighteenth century. It seeks to distinguish between what was temporary and what is permanent in those old traditions. In the face of recent psychologies, it makes bold to declare, as an immediate fact of experience, that man's nature is divided: that he has, on the one hand, a self which endlessly desires and which accounts for greed and hatred and fear, and on the other hand a self known as a power of restraint, which imposes a limit to sheer spontaneous desiring. The merely natural self is felt as part of the restless flux of nature; the restraining or ethical self is felt as part of something permanent and unchanging, a principle of rest and peace within the turbid flow of our experience.

A sound society, on this view, will be one led by men who, like Washington and Lincoln, are themselves guided by this principle of rest and peace. Such leaders are not likely to emerge from a society gone mad with visions of ever-increasing security and comfort. The logical upshot of the humanitarian movement is not social peace but class warfare and international warfare. A humanitarian like Upton Sinclair is typical in preaching brotherhood and inciting conflict. True leaders can come only when they have behind them the support of a sufficient number of persons whose temperamental imperialism has been brought under control by the higher self. For this reason a true civilization must begin with the individual, who is responsible for the care of his higher interests, and who can care for them more effectively than anyone else. The reform of others, though tempting, is never so effective as the reform of oneself. Thus every man, as father or mother, friend or citizen, renders his most fundamental service to society by being, so far as he can, an example that others may safely follow. Imitation plays a large rôle in the humanism of Aristotle, and Christianity is only the imitation of Christ. We can all see how imitation operates today, whether in our Main Streets or in our colleges. When the right things are imitated, it is a far firmer social cement than the glowing sympathies that tend so easily to alternate with self-seeking and hatred.

But is there to be no place for human sympathy as such? Are we to help others only by the example of our own integrity?

By no means. Justice is not incompatible with mercy and charity. Jesus taught us, as no one else has, the true meaning of charity, and this is a virtue appropriate to the humanist no less than to the Christian. For charity is a profounder form of that humane philosophy of friendship which Aristotle taught. According to Aristotle, friendship attains its possibilities only when the higher self of a man is brought into relation with the higher self of his friend. Charity, in its best sense, is individual charity. Most of the organized charity of the humanitarian movement is nothing but a form of communal materialism. It accomplishes much good, of a sort, but that sort is material. It is not concerned with brotherhood; to see that, we have only to ask who the father of all these brothers is. The Heavenly Father? The words die cold on our lips.

It is something, but not much, to feed men. Perhaps you recall the tonic lines of Emerson:

He who feeds men, feedeth few;
He serves all who dares be true.

Sociology and the Black Belt

John Crowe Ransom

Even the general reader would accord several stars of merit to Professor Johnson's *Shadow of the Plantation**; all the more gladly considering its classification. It is a sociological survey, but not an ordinary performance in that character.

A survey of what? Of precisely 612 Negro families and quasi-families, mostly cotton workers, in a section of Macon County, Alabama, with respect to such broad features as domestic relations, economic life, schooling, religion, play, and health.

Professor Johnson has accomplished a masterpiece of fact-finding. He concludes his chapters of fact, where it is possible, with tabulations. But the evidence and the tabulations are about all; he offers few comments, and may be said to be extremely chary of generalizations. He brings in Doctor Robert E. Park, a veteran sociologist, to undertake the Introduction, which presents the general concepts. Doctor Park is eligible for this task for two good reasons: he is one of those who think out the philosophy of sociology, having both inspired and indoctrinated many of our younger social workers in his former classes at the University of Chicago; and he knows Macon County, having once been at Tuskegee in that county, and served as Booker Washington's right hand.

To confess here to a misgiving. Perhaps the present reviewer is not the right man for this book, being habitually a little irritated with sociologists. But it may be that this irritation is not entirely without objective foundation. Sociology is at the same time a struggling infant science and, by strong preference, a self-contained one. Its devotees do not always bother much about a background. It possesses for their discipline no dialectical tradition like that which keeps in the straight path a philosopher, or a philologist, or a natural scientist, or even a literary critic.

---

* SHADOW OF THE PLANTATION *by Charles S. Johnson* (UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS. 215 pp. $2.50).

The apprehensions which another sociological treatise arouses in the critical reader are at least partly realized in this Introduction. Doctor Park is a good writer, if it is possible to say so with the reservation that he is still a sociological one; that is, one who uses a highly technical jargon and yet manages to write loosely.

For instance, he makes a wise and admirable observation when he writes: "It is evident, in spite of all that has been written of human nature and of human behaviour, that the sources of joy and sorrow are still obscure. It is evident also that, as Stevenson says . . . 'to miss the joy is to miss everything'." One would not think it necessary to improve on Stevenson's saying. But the godless Stevenson has to be translated into sociology, with the following effect: "That is to say, if you miss the joy you miss the one aspect of a people's life which more than anything else gives vitality to cultural forms and ensures their persistence, possibly in some new and modified form, under changed conditions." The elaboration here is by way of pure invention; it is such writing that makes hard reading, and an esoteric "literature", out of sociology even when it is substantively thin. Does sociology exist by virtue of the multiplication of entities beyond necessity? It is too easy to catch it in the act of watering its stock.

But this passage is connected with the development of an important topic: the meaning of caste. Whether it is due to the excellence of his own intuitions, or to his professional ideology, Doctor Park makes what in substance is a fine statement, and says what looks like the ultimate truth:

> It has been observed that as long as their social institutions are functioning normally, primitive peoples ordinarily exhibit an extraordinary zest in the life they lead, even when that life, like that of the Eskimo in the frozen North or the pigmies in the steaming forest of Central Africa, seems to be one of constant privation and hardship.
>
> On the other hand, when some catastrophe occurs which undermines the traditional structure of their society, they sometimes lose their natural lust for life, and that euphoria which enabled them to support the hardships of their primitive existence frequently deserts them. That catastrophe may be, and frequently is, the sudden advent of a more highly civilized people intent upon their improvement and uplift by incorporating them in a more highly organized industrial society.
>
> Under such circumstances, a people may be so completely obsessed by a sense of their own inferiority that they no longer desire to live as a people; and if they live as individuals, they will prefer to identify themselves, as far as they are permitted to do so, with the invading or dominant people.
>
> It is in some such way as this, *i. e.*, by the incorporation of defeated or merely disheartened people into some

larger and more complex social unit, that castes are formed.

Here we have the essential inner tragedy of the Negro's present condition, and it may be of his permanent destiny, in our America.

II

Professor Johnson's exhibit, which is the body of the book, is a distinguished one. The distinction does not lie exactly in the thoroughness and orderliness of his facts, nor in the sociological presuppositions, though these seem perfectly competent. It lies in the peculiar quality of document used to attest his facts; Doctor Park defines and commends it as a "human" document. Professor Johnson gives the direct testimony of the Negroes whom he has questioned. He is obviously a man of rare tact to have elicited it, and he has the good taste to give it in the vernacular, not censored, and not whittled down to fit the topic under discussion. The effect is more like that of an art than of a science: sociological interest gives way and aesthetic understanding is born; and the reader, perhaps unexpectedly, finds in himself a complete sympathy with these black folk, and a respect for their dignity. If this is sociology, then sociology is something less than a science, but at the same time it is something a good deal more. For it is a technique of impression and feeling rather than moralization and will, and its project is wide and difficult at the cost of being not entirely practical. A pure science cannot afford to objectify its material as faithfully as this.

Sometimes a single piece of testimony illuminates a whole group of abstract topics — "mortality, morbidity, illegitimacy, illiteracy, poverty, insufficiency of food and clothing". I quote a part of one statement:

> When my third baby was coming, his father jumped up and married another girl. She was in a family way and I wondered why he married her 'cause she was in a family way and he didn't marry me when I was in a family way too. This girl was a school teacher and he married her one month before she got down. Then when he started coming back round, I told him, "I ain't going to fool with you no more; you done fooled me enough." I got real mad. I got mad about him, so I told him to stay away 'cause I felt bad about it . . . and I was 'specting to marry him.
>
> He left here and went to Montgomery. Then he sent me money to come to him but I was so hungry that I took the money and bought us something t' eat. I guess I'd a went if we hadn't been so hungry. After he married, he would give me rice and things for the chillen every time he saw me in town. He just seemed to be in love with the chillen. They say now that he is living with another woman. His wife died when she was getting down the second time. He had left and went to Montgomery to work but they wasn't separated. It was after she died that he sent for me to come to him. . . .
>
> Just when I thought I got my chillen well, my oldest boy died. He just rotted to death. This is how he got sick. He started with a headache. He said his head nearly bust open and Br'er got some salts and give him and he didn't complain no more for about two weeks; then he went to school one morning and the next morning they didn't have no school and he got up and it started with a hurting right here [just inside the elbow bend]. He said it was itching first, then hurting, and he just started running 'round having fits. He just went crazy. We rubbed and greased his arms and we rubbed him good,

but he just went crazy and tore up the things in the house. The doctor give him some medicine when we took him to him and he said it was pellagacy but I ain't seed where it done him a bit of good. He told one man down here that it was the curriest pellagacy he ever seed in his life, and he told somebody up there that he didn't know what it was; but he told me it was pellagacy. Well, that boy would run away and I'd hear him calling way up on the hill. He just come unjointed. It all just rotted off — all his hands and arms. He bit one of his fingers off and he never was in his right mind after he first went crazy. He would take the bed down and when you ask him what he was doing it for, he'd say he wanted to put it up on a hill. He swold up and just come in two. He died in two weeks.

When I got sick I went to Dr. —— and he told me I needed shots but that he couldn't give them to me 'cause I wasn't able to pay. He asked me if I had any property and I told him no. He said he just couldn't give 'em to me then. He said, "If you just had a cow to put up against it!"

To have presented this material would seem to be, primarily, a literary achievement. But sociology intends to be, one supposes, for the most part, a science; it has practical aims. So here is a wretched population inviting improvement; where shall we begin? Most of us would proceed at once to the character of the economic determination behind this sort of exhibit.

Professor Johnson devotes much attention to presenting fairly the facts of the economic status of the black cotton worker. He is usually a tenant farmer, still entangled in the plantation system — a system which flourished, if it ever flourished, a hundred years ago and now is in complete decay. The condition of

Southern tenant farmers, both white and black for that matter, is economically the lowest to be found in America, and constitutes the most urgent of all our permanent economic problems.

Analysis has not generally proved so easy as to render Professor Johnson's admirable account commonplace. The Negro tenant is sometimes simply exploited by his unscrupulous landlord; but perhaps not generally; the author thinks that this is not quite the account of the matter, as a whole. The Negro tenant is the victim of the plantation system, and it is symbolized for him in his landlord. But the landlord in his turn is the victim of the same system, and it is symbolized for him in his banker. And it might be too naïve to stop there, and to identify the system at last with the banker's evil machinations; for the banker may be himself a helpless victim of the system, with a bogey of his own to fear. What then is the plantation system? A casualty of our money economy; that is, of our modern industrial system; that is, of that blind economic organization which governs almost the whole of our business life, and has the following characteristics: defining narrowly the income-producing functions, and turning all the members of society into functionaries dependent on money-income; then tending increasingly to make one big business world out of all the little business communities until it is impossible for the functionaries to figure their markets, or even to find the responsible parties with whom they might hold discussions, make agreements, and lodge complaints. Here I suppose I go beyond Professor Johnson's analysis, but I do not in any sense controvert him.

What is to be done about it? Sociologists rarely speak as economists; but here is a case where sociology must wait on economics; probably going on making other surveys in the meantime, for I have heard it observed that of the making of surveys there is in sociology no end. The practical conclusions which Doctor Park reaches upon reading this book are as follows:

> What the findings of this survey suggest, then, is: (1) the necessity of a wider—in fact, a world-wide—and comparative study of the cotton plantation not merely as an economic and industrial but as a cultural unit; and (2) a comparative study of the actual conditions of the world in which people on the plantation live.

That seems rather pusillanimous. A non-sociologist is in a position to pay a higher compliment to Professor Johnson's book, by saying that it carries conviction and suggests the need, not necessarily of further books, but of a little action. Of political-economic-social action, comprehensive, "totalitarian"; the hardest kind of action to which in our modern enfeeblement we could turn. If the section is still capable of action, then it will never find a better occasion for it than here in the plight of the tenant farmers, black and white. But it is clear that effective action will have to be of that tenor known as "agrarian". For it is the intrusion of industrial action into a field unfit for it that has produced the present situation.

Maurras

HOFFMAN NICKERSON

OUTSIDE of France the sixth of last February astonished a world wrongly taught to believe the parliamentary Third Republic a popular and respected régime. In fact the incompetence and corruption of the politicians had long been notorious, and almost ten years ago the present writer happened to see a brilliant flash of the new, constructive forces at work: *i. e.*, the student riots which overthrew the first Herriot cabinet.

The scene was the Hill of the University on the left bank of the Seine in Paris, that Latin Quarter where Innocent III, Dante, and so many other great Europeans have studied. In all civilized countries universities influence the national life, and nowhere more than in France. The Quarter is a place of contrasts; it is full of the young life and loves of the students, and yet its back streets preserve fragment after sturdy fragment of grey mediaeval stone. Strolling there in 1925 the writer came upon a student demonstration unlike anything he had ever seen. The youngsters were marching in column of fours, hundreds of them, indeed I learned afterward that several thousand were there, but they differed from an American football parade in that they carried heavy walking sticks, almost clubs, and had the air of soldiers going into action. They were briskly obedient to the commands of their leaders but their discipline was not the stiff Prussian sort, it was the supple Gallic discipline that has charged to victory on so many battlefields. Of this I saw a vivid example: a heavy, two-wheeled coal cart drawn by a single horse was labouring up a steeply sloping street when it was halted by their column. The horse, although he could keep going against the slope when he had momentum, could not hold at a standstill; he strained and looked like falling, whereat the driver, tugging at a massive wheel, called out to the students. At once the nearest leader of these halted the column to leave a gap, one took the horse's head, a dozen pushed from behind or turned the spokes until the cart was under way again; then the march went on. I went my way, but it was a pity I did, for shortly after I left them they staged a good-sized battle with the police, not the ordinary police but the riot squads of the Central Brigade, the *assommeurs* or smashers. The police finally won, but it was a moral victory for the students, since more policemen went to the hospital than students to jail. The latter did not carry those heavy walking sticks for nothing, and when I saw them they certainly looked like fighting.

Next day the papers blazed with the story: the Cartel of radical parties which had just seized power had tried to pay a political debt by appointing one of their active supporters professor in the Law Faculty. The students had prevented his lecturing, crowding the room and shouting whenever he tried to speak. By law and custom centuries old, descending doubtless from the clerical immunities of the Middle Ages, neither police nor soldiers may enter a building of the University of Paris except by invitation of the particular faculty which controls that building. In this case the Law Faculty were unanimous with the students; they declined to invite the police. This left the students supreme, the police could only blockade but not assault the law lecture hall, nor could they prevent students going peaceably in and out on their lawful occasions. Even though the big demonstration I saw had failed to raise the siege, there were plenty of students to keep the game going by relays inside, howling down the wretched political appointee whenever he tried to lecture. Presently Paris began to laugh – the spectacle of pompous grafters, calling themselves the Cabinet of the French Republic but helpless before the determination of the youngsters, was irresistibly comic. Next the political appointee resigned, whereat Paris laughed louder; the fellow and his gang had not dared make it an endurance contest against the boys. The Quarter buzzed with oratory and conversation; ugly questions were asked in the Chamber by deputies whose constituent's sons had been manhandled by the police. Meanwhile laughter continued in the intervals of denunciation, until Herriot's rivals began to take a hand and the unhappy Lyonnais resigned.

It was still more significant of the new France that the students had acted in the name of the exiled king. Throughout the later nineteenth century the Quarter had been Left; that is, anti-traditional. But in our own time, and most emphatically in those gay riots of 1925, the Parisian student has turned the crusading fervour of idealistic youth not toward radicalism but toward royalism. Today, as February 6th abundantly showed, the Parisian middle class, maker of every French revolution for a hundred and fifty years, is beginning to move against the parliamentary fraud.

More than all others, one man has worked this miracle. Sitting and working in his Parisian newspaper office he has not only reawakened France; he has also made himself the chief intellectual force of the world-wide counter-revolution. As Mussolini is the foremost executive soldier in the rally of civilization against the modernist barbarians, so the chief source of reconstructive ideas is Charles Maurras.

Irving Babbitt surpassed Maurras in encyclopaedic learning and equalled him in the orderly, almost architectural arrangement of ideas; Paul Elmer More, Belloc, and Chesterton are his peers in literary charm, but More's ideas are not yet fully defined; while the influence of Belloc, and of Chesterton during his later period, has been deflected by their attachment to ultramontane Roman Catholicism. In France the serene Bainville can track down the slipperiest financier through no matter what jungle of figures; the vivacious Daudet can demolish subversive fallacies with unequalled cheerfulness and gusto. But both Bainville and Daudet are happy to call Maurras Master.

For a century and a half Christendom has rocked with revolutions; only yesterday democracy and modernism seemed to have destroyed traditional thought, government, and social life. Happily the revolutionary triumphs were indecisive, and now the tide has turned. All Central Europe, following the brilliant Italian lead, has cast out democracy. Even the Moscow Jews, with all their follies and crimes, are at least not democrats. As these lines are written, only one great, continental European power – France, slow to move after so many revolutions – remains unable to throw off the parliamentary poison. But from France, the centre and pivot of Europe, the reconstructive ideas of Maurras have proceeded, and in France the dry bones are beginning to stir. From that fertile earth, the arena of Christendom's debates, the seeds of counter-revolution are lustily sprouting. Perhaps next year the good grain will be ripe for the harvest, perhaps tomorrow, we do not know. But whether the reaping be late or soon, Maurras has been the sower of the wholesome seed.

On the political life of France and upon her position in Europe, volumes might be written. Let it here suffice that the French, the most energetic and gifted people of Europe, have also the least unified character. The story of Russia is a recurring blend of mystical devotion, despotism, and sloth, that of the Germanies records the suppression of the easy-going, vague, and lovable tradition of their more civilized South and West by the ferocious rigidity of Prussia. That of Spain still shows the fatigue of her tremendous sixteenth-century effort; that of England from Henry VIII to George V centres upon the rise, culmination, and decay of an aristocratic system.

France, on the other hand, is capable of divergent intensities. Even that most cultivated and intelligent American novelist, Edith Wharton, knowing the French well and profoundly attached to them, analyzes them in terms of mere contradiction, saying that they are "at once the most voluptuous and the most ascetic of peoples". The explanation is the lack of unity in the national character; the French, no matter what line they may be taking at the moment, will rush zealously forward and then snap back with an elasticity denied to other Europeans. Thus both in politics and economics they are cautious to a fault, only to break out at intervals in the wildest speculation or the most disinterested crusades. So France can be at once the "Eldest Daughter of the Church" and the world's centre of militant atheism. So she cursed Europe with democracy and now, with the pen of Maurras, she has damned democracy forever.

Charles Maurras was born in 1868 at Martigues on the Mediterranean just east of the mouths of the Rhone. In youth, like so many vivid provincials before him, he came up to the capital. His first interest was in what is called "pure" literature, if indeed letters can ever be wholly divorced from philosophy or philosophy from politics; he was a friend of Moréas, the French-speaking Greek poet who died young; and he was in love with rhythm and beautiful words.

That which turned Maurras from literature *sub specie aeternitatis* to the Word as a weapon in the daily struggle of political journalism, was the Dreyfus case. Like so many other ardent and generous young Frenchmen, he suddenly saw the Third Republic as an anti-national government, hostile not only to the national traditions but even to the survival of the nation. He saw its elected masters, duped by Jewish propaganda and democratic envy, deliberately blind the French army – not thirty years after Sedan! – by destroying the Intelligence Service. I anticipate events to note the tragic harvest of that destruction in the frontier battles of 1914. He saw Catholic French officers spied upon and denied promotion. He heard the religion of his ancestors everywhere abused and vilified. He saw the interests of the real, actual, and living France recklessly sacrificed, trodden under foot by queer gangs of Jews, anti-national French Calvinists, and atheist Free Masons. He heard Tripod-Dreyfus's partisans proclaiming that France must become "the Christ of nations", that her millions of inhabitants must suffer so that "justice" might be done to a single Jewish officer smelling to heaven of treachery. And Maurras was disgusted.

Scarcely less remarkable were the divisions and impotence of the French patriots. Admirable men, they found themselves perpetually at cross purposes. Were the best Frenchmen of the 1890's so much worse than their forefathers? And if not, how had France come to exist?

The answer came to him like a flash of lightning: the Monarchy. It was the Capetian House which for a thousand years had guided the vehement and sometimes disorganized French character, at once animating, unifying, and reconciling the ardent Gallic energies. By contrast, it had been the revolutionary ferment, the quarrel with the Church, the law of divorce, the compulsory equal division of all inheritance, the want of moderation in the use of victory, which had undermined Napoleon, so that that genius did his adopted country more harm than good. France is a country where – in spite of modern "scientific" barbarism – the art of letters is still known and loved. With Maurras's talent, had he avoided politics, every honour of the official literary world would have been at his feet. Instead he threw himself heart and soul into what then seemed hopeless opposition.

A generation ago Royalism was declining. Here and there in Brittany, Normandy, or Provence, the peasantry had remained faithful. So had some of the nobles; but by no means all, for some had preferred to regild their coronets by marrying Jewish money. Pope Leo XIII had advised the Catholics to rally to the Republic. In the universities most professors were radical and almost all students more radical still. Worst of all, the Royalist appeal was largely sentimental, without practicality, logical coherence, or aggressive enthusiasm. Middle-class support was conspicuously lacking, and the triumphant Republicans contemptuously called Royalism "the party of the dowagers", fat and wealthy old women.

Today Maurras and the able men whom he has recruited have changed all that. If Republicanism, with all the resources of the state at its command, remains the nominal creed of most Frenchmen, the Royalists are an increasing, disciplined, and active minority. We have seen that through the university students, the young *élite* of the nation, the Latin Quarter of Paris is theirs. The party is now predominantly middle-class, the class that has made not only the half-dozen French revolutions but also the modern world. Let the strange alliance between the Vatican and the grafting Republican politicians do what it may, French parliamentarism is mortally sick. Moreover the spear-head of the whole nation-wide, rational, and patriotic revolt against governmental instability, incompetence, and corruption is the Royalist party with Maurras for leader.

The manner of Maurras's propaganda is as notable as its increasing effect. In a world dominated by the brute pressure of money and of organized publicity spattered broadcast over unthinking mobs, he and his followers have steadily addressed themselves to the intelligence. They have not neglected the power of sentiment; it was they who first organized the annual demonstrations on Joan of Arc's day, now so popular and so firmly rooted. Their defense of the exiled and systematically slandered Royal House has been by no means cold. Nor have they neglected the inspiring effect of great public meetings. But they have kept their writings and speeches on a level appropriate to educated, thinking people. . . . Noting their considerable measure of success, one dares hope that perhaps the present age is not so intellectually beheaded as it sometimes seems.

The first article of Maurras's political creed is the existence of fixed political laws. Thus he sets himself squarely against the cloudy German metaphysics which befogged the nineteenth century, while that conceited era, babbling of perpetual progress, stumbled toward the precipice of 1914. Man, says Maurras, is not indefinitely changeable; he can no more achieve perfect wisdom or virtue than he can grow wings or six legs. He remains man. Human societies can be governed in only three ways: either as monarchies, that is by a single magistrate; as oligarchies, by a few out of the citizen body; or as democracies, by all citizens.

Furthermore, large states are physically incapable of democracy. Wherever the citizens are too numerous to meet in a single assembly ("to listen to the voice of a single herald" as the Greeks said) they must delegate power. Large states which attempt democracy inevitably become plutocracies, ruled by wealth; which rule is varied only by spasms of demagogy, *i. e.*, mob emotion. In ancient times, in the small political unit of the city state, with slaves to do most manual work, and the local traditions very strong, democracy had its moment of Athenian grandeur; but even in Athens it collapsed quickly into disaster. In modern nations democracy is a mere façade of fine words set up to hide a reality of graft and incompetence – especially poisonous to the poor whom democracy flatters and exploits. This, says our French Royalist, is a universal truth.

Is it indeed true? The present writer, for one, is inclined to agree. At all events it was no Frenchman but an exceptionally talented Englishman, Byron, who said: "Democracy is an aristocracy of blackguards." It was not even a European, it was Hamilton who wrote: "Democracies have been short in their lives and violent in their deaths." Under very different conditions, we may compare the incoherent decline of the pure democracy of the Town Meeting in the New England cities with the continual revolutions of Latin America.

Turning from democracy to monarchy, Maurras insists its prevalence everywhere throughout history, together with its beautiful trappings and poetry of loyalism and legitimacy, merely proves its rational, practical usefulness. Just so, one might argue, our ancestors wrote so much good verse about the sword because it was the most effective of hand-to-hand weapons. So far Maurras's argument is abundantly supported by the towering prestige of that great elective monarchy, the American presidency. But he goes further, insisting that hereditary monarchies are better than elected because elections, being contests, are either trivial farces or potential civil wars. The continual battles of ballots foster discord among citizens, whereas hereditary monarchy is a unifying force. Proverbially "everybody's business is nobody's business", but under monarchy the public interest is also the personal interest of the most powerful family in the state. Hereditary monarchy is also the most responsible form of government: whereas elected politicians strut their little hour, feather their nests or no, and then depart, an hereditary prince receives power as a trust from his father and hopes in turn to bequeath it to his son. Again the argument may be buttressed with American examples: Henry Adams, who had known many Presidents, recorded of all that their sudden achievement of immense power invariably afflicted them with an almost insane excitement. By contrast the heir to a throne is annealed in advance against the vertigo of greatness, for he has known from babyhood what power should some day be his. Whereas a democratic politician may be tempted to rash courses in order to carry the next election, hereditary monarchs are as unlikely to play ducks and drakes with the fortune of the state as ordinarily prudent fathers to risk their children's heritage.

The familiar anti-monarchical argument from bad kings Maurras counters by insisting that institutions should be judged on their average performance. Even a mediocre king, in no way more gifted than the average subject, has had the enormous advantage of early training in statesmanship. From his youth he has heard great affairs discussed at his father's table, as he grows he is increasingly employed on important public business, and when he becomes King he is free to devote to government such talents as he may possess without fear of the next election. That an average man, bred to kingship and enormously conspicuous through his great office, should be as negligent and slothful in public business as the average voter is morally impossible. Unlike elected politicians, he is too rich to be bribed and too powerful to be blackmailed. Unlike ambitious self-made men, he has not achieved power by trampling down a squirming crowd of competitors. Even the kings of whom democratic historians have made nincompoops may stand higher when seen in the fuller light of advancing historical science. For instance Pierre Gaxotte has recently shown Louis XV to have been an abler ruler than legend has made him; it was not a small thing for that all-too-human Prince to have added both Corsica and Lorraine to France, while Napoleon after all his victories left her smaller than he found her. Even the slow-thinking Louis XVI increased the relative strength of his country by detaching the United States from England, in contrast with the clever usurper Napoleon III whose grandiose combinations weakened France by unifying Germany and Italy. Further, kings are often above average ability; indeed if there be anything in heredity there is no reason why men should not be bred to govern as horses are bred to race or hounds to follow a scent. In the frequent cases of high royal ability the enormous national benefits are obvious.

Look now upon this picture and on that.

Had parliamentary "democracy" proved a moderately dignified or even tolerable form of government, then abstract argument and historical evidence in favour of monarchy might have fallen upon deaf ears. A priceless asset for the new Royalist propaganda has been the notorious truth about the Third Republic. In the Mercy of God, lies are perpetually contradicting each other, whereas every truth, in its own way, confirms all other truths. It has been said that all dying institutions first dig their own graves and French Republicanism has been no exception. Naturally the régime has done its best to whitewash itself, but even with the whole machinery of government under its control the task has proved impossible.

Irrespective of what people wish or desire in the matter, the truth about the Third Republic may be briefly summarized. The worst enemy of the French people cannot deny their intense and persistent energy, high intelligence, and vivid patriotism. When well governed they are an admirable instrument in the hands of their rulers. The Third Republic followed Napoleon III whose unwise foreign policy had culminated in the galling defeats of 1870-71. Nevertheless the internal policy of the Second Empire had been sound; French wealth was great and continually increasing; the Navy was second only to England's, and on the eve of the Prussian victories France was the chief continental power. Even allowing for the peculiar and very strong position of England, it would have been no unpardonable exaggeration to have called France the first power of the world. The Prussian triumph had indeed been a fearful blow, but the wound was not mortal; indeed the defeat had stimulated the national determination not to go under. Thus the Republican politicians held excellent cards.

The best hand can be wasted by unskilful play. In domestic policy, the average Frenchman has one and only one good thing to say for the Republic: "At least it has saved us from government by priests." For the French, even when devout, are anti-clerical. It was wittily said that the Second Empire suffered from too many petticoated politicians, both priests in their long gowns and women. I digress to note that just as no men love women more than do the French, so none more dislike political females, "earnest" women, and similar unfeminine busybodies. Returning from this digression, the Republic voted the conscription soon after '71, showed some skill in gathering allies against Prussia, and in '17 produced an energetic Premier, Clemenceau.

Beyond this there is nothing to be said. As for anti-clericalism, the Kings too were anti-clerical; men like Louis XIV and St. Louis vigorously so. But almost always the Capetians were anti-clerical with moderation and decency whereas Republican anti-clericalism has been consistently petty, quarrelsome, and harmful to the national interests. Indeed it has often become mere persecution; for years after the Dreyfus Case all army officers who went to Mass were systematically spied upon and refused promotion. According to an often heard story, when Foch was a Colonel the Minister of War directed him to give the names of his subordinate Mass-going officers; whereat the future victor of '18 pleaded inability on the ground that he himself always sat in the front pew and never turned around! The anti-religious campaigns have cost France dear in alienating the sympathies of devout Alsace, and weakened her position in the Near East where she has long been the traditional protector of the local Roman Catholics; not to speak of the effect upon the Vatican's European policy.

During the War, until Clemenceau – though with an insufficient severity – crushed the plotters in '17, the anti-national intrigues of too many politicians were notorious. Among the important men, Malvy and Caillaux had perhaps the blackest records, but there was good reason to suspect many more of the Left politicians, especially among the Socialists and in the dominant Radical-Socialist Party. After the War the abject failure to levy taxes ended in an inflation of more than six to one. Meanwhile the abandonment of reparations and the evacuation of the Rhineland have favoured Prussia's all too obvious plan to repeat her aggression of 1914.

When we look at the structure of this government which has done so little good work, we find it based, as in England and America, upon universal suffrage, therefore compelled to flatter the masses and fear all organized groups of voters. But in England universal suffrage is tempered by the considerable remains of aristocratic tradition while in the United States it is guided by the enormously strong monarchical office of the Presidency. In France the thing is at its worst. To thwart the nation's well-known desire for one-man government, the politicians have deprived the French President of power; his one real function is to receive a large salary at the expense of the taxpayers. The true governing body is the parliament which can at any time dismiss the Premier and his Cabinet. And what a parliament! By the well-known natural law of politics, sovereign assemblies are either aristocratic or corrupt in the widest sense of corruption, which is putting one's personal interest before that of the state. Thus the old English parliamentarians governed well because they were aristocrats, and their prestige still supports their declining successors today. But to have an aristocratic parliament you must have a people which desires class government. Throughout Christendom such peoples are seldom found and most emphatically the French are not of that sort. Detesting aristocratic government, they have saddled themselves with a corrupt one. Moreover the intense French character, like a high-mettled horse, is perpetually in danger of rearing in faction fights and in periodic civil wars.

For centuries the Capetian monarchy curbed this tendency; it is a capital vice of the parliamentary Republic to encourage it. The parliament splits into endless little groups each playing for its own hand in the petty and constant struggle for wealth and power. Through the fog of assembly-government over negligent electors, necessarily absorbed in their private affairs, most of these groups are practically invisible to the nation at large. Consequently they play personal politics, and the system which puts every Cabinet at the mercy of an adverse parliamentary vote gives each group good opportunity for political blackmail. Since these opportunities are constantly being seized, and since it is impossible for the most resourceful Premier long to satisfy the boundless appetites of the hungry pack, French Cabinets can very seldom count on a definite lease of life. Even with the best intentions in the world, Ministers can give but little time to the necessary business of governing because they must constantly struggle against the ever present threat of dismissal. The blurred whirligig of Cabinets makes continuity impossible, and since power must go somewhere, the state is manoeuvred by secret forces, the Free Masons (in France every Mason must be an atheist), the financiers, or the powerful secret police. Each of these hidden powers can bribe or blackmail the wretched politicians just as these can blackmail the Cabinet.

That France has not completely gone under after more than sixty years of this, testifies brilliantly to the vitality of the nation.

Maurras and his Royalists remain a minority, granted. They are however a convinced, active, and disciplined minority, whereas the Republican majority is weakened by its large proportion of knaves at the top and dupes at the bottom. That the base parliament, now thoroughly exposed, will fall, seems as certain as any future political cataclysm can be. Presumably it will be replaced by some strong Executive such as the French love. In the present state of Europe, it needs no prophet or son of a prophet to tell us that that Executive will centre upon a single man. Let us assume for the sake of argument that he will not at first be the King. None the less he will owe much to Royalist support, he will be served by men who, whether Royalists or no, have been filled with Maurrasian ideas, and the new programme must be a return to tradition modernized but preserved. Now the soul of French political tradition is the Kingship. With the surviving parliamentary knaves and their host of dupes on his hands, the new Executive will not quarrel with the Royalists. But not to quarrel with the Royalists is the first step toward restoring the King.

Is this a long leap into the always uncertain future? Perhaps and perhaps not. Surely the parliament will fall, for Maurras has killed it by telling the truth. An organ of government may survive unpopularity; it cannot long survive universal contempt. And when the parliament falls, events will move quickly.

The Cow, the Church, the United States

A Summer Rumination on the Face of Nature

G. R. ELLIOTT

JUST now I have been looking through a recent scientific book, a precise and exhaustive treatise on *The Evolution of the Human Face from the Face of the Fishes*. It has amazed and fascinated me. I had not hitherto realized that "the human face divine" is so fundamentally pisciform. Often, like any other brooder upon things in general, I had pondered the affinities between the countenance of man and the faces of other animals, horse, cow, pig, dog, elephant, dinosaur, bumblebee, and so on; omitting of course the monkey, who has become too trite biologically to stir an up-to-date fancy; but omitting also, and without such justification, the Face of the Fishes. Here surely an immense new realm is opened up for the human imagination. There is much more water than land on the face of the globe, but so far that face has been confined to *terra firma*. It "stops with the shore", in Byron's phrase. The shore has promontories like vast human noses, huge teeth of rock gnash the surge below, and tongues of the land run out; but there our physiognomy ends. To be sure we speak of the "face of the deep", but this is a blatantly transferred epithet, thin, rhetorical. The face of the deep, so far, is an eyeless, featureless, quite inhuman thing.

The face of the earth, on the other hand, is very intensely human. For it comprises a myriad of animal visages — all the way up from ant to giraffe, including of course the mediocre monkey — which are known to be more or less related to our own. This knowledge comes from poetry, mainly and originally; thence it passes to science to get worked out in detail. Certainly, during the past two centuries, poetry has been extraordinarily aided by science in manifesting our kinship with nature, especially with the animals. But science (in so far as it is not poetry) is interested in rears, not fronts: science from this point of view may be called the back side of poetry. Poetry is concerned with the face of things. At any rate it is poetry that has both caused and *countenanced* the discoveries of natural science. The poetry of modern times has succeeded in revealing in nature a far more intimate and intricate visage than was known to men of old. It has humanized the face of the earth in innumerable ways.

Walt Whitman, for example, put a fresh meaning into the faces of cows. Certain ancient religious cults made the cow divine; Whitman made her human. In those old cults she symbolized the divine fertility of nature; in Whitman she represents the fertile idleness of man — that large, cud-chewing vacancy which every industrious citizen ought to enjoy occasionally, and from which he may return to his work with new sapotaceous energy. That idle mood is most at home in sunny prairies and meadows; where we may recall, cheerfully, the fact that all flesh is grass, notably the flesh of cows, and roastbeef merely grass well done; and where, herbivorous in body and in soul, but eschewing all herbs of toxic working, such as De Quincey's poppy or the lotus of young Tennyson, we are content, for the time being,

In the undulating fields to live and lie reclined
On the grass, with cows together, careless of mankind.

Whitman, of course, went further. For if man, generally speaking, is a religious animal, such, peculiarly speaking, was the case of Walt Whitman. And so while humanizing the cow he did not make her less divine; he touched her with solemn thought. He did not exactly revive the archaic bovine divinity, but he summoned us to venerate in nature and in man a sort of divine bovinity. No doubt he deified his own extraordinary zest for ruminant relaxation. This fact must be admitted from the standpoint of cold criticism; but I happen to be cold to that standpoint just at the present moment. For out there beyond my windows in a summer retreat in New England the meadows, rolling between the Atlantic Ocean and me, are gay with sun and wind. The tall brown and green grasses are interspersed with purple vetch and white marguerites—and with Dutch-belted cows, very worthy creatures, scenically and gastronomically.

Suddenly I recall a famous local episode bearing upon the religion of bovinity. Some years ago, on All Hallows' Eve, a band of undergraduates belonging to a venerable college in a nearby town led a cow up the winding staircase of their collegiate chapel and deposited her in the belfry; whence she was removed with great difficulty by a gang of work-men in the dawn of All Hallows' Day. Significantly the sacred beast went up more easily than she came down. Doubtless those pious students were not fully aware of the significance of their rite. They were not trying to discredit the Congregational Faith that had nurseled the infancy of their college. That faith to be sure was less vital to them than it had been to their forebears; but they were not demanding that it be overtopped by the ancient exaltation of the cow. However, many great pranks in the drama of human history have been symbolical far beyond the intention of the actors. And it is a fact that scores of hoarier creeds than Congregationalism have been outlasted by the antique veneration of the cow; which still obtains in India and is engaged in by one of the leading intellectuals of our time, Mr. Gandhi; who is known to be much influenced by the Occidental nature-poets, including Walt Whitman.

Many cults shall pass away but the cult of the cow shall not pass away — not till human civility disappears from the face of the earth. At the present time more and more critics are urging that modern civilization, like that of Greece and Rome, may be weakened fatally by excessive urbanization. Fully conscious of this danger I would point out that one sign of it is the attitude of the modern civilian towards the cow. At best he views her idyllically: when he ascends the hills in vacation time he likes to see herds of cows, as he likes to see hordes of golfers, dotting the outspread landscape. Mainly, however, he regards her as at once a practical necessity and a practical joke. Now certainly the cow has those three aspects: she is idyllic, beefy-milky, and often quite absurd. But also she is the perennial symbol — not a *mere* but a *real* symbol, an inherent feature, an organic outgrowth — of the mystic, vast, leisurely, benign fertility of nature. And I claim that, whatever practical measures may be taken to fill up the modern breach between the town and the farm, this division will never be healed *in spirit* till the industrious citizen, including the commercialized farmer, re-learns the religious meaning of the word bovinity. A catholic civility, embracing and uniting the life of the city and the life of the country, must comprise a due and right veneration for the Cow.

Far be it from me to urge that the cow should become a prominent object on the premises of the modern church. The seductive example cited above should not, I believe, be followed literally; cows ought not to be placed in our belfries: the cow-bell and the church-bell must be kept on different levels. Nor should cows be installed in the pulpits or side-chapels or other sacred recesses of Protestant and Catholic edifices. Perhaps the life-size effigy of a small and good-looking calf — marble, of course, not gold — might be placed in a sunlit nook near the church's south entrance. But bearing in mind the difficulty which organized religion has continually had, before and since the time of Moses, in keeping within bounds the veneration of sacred images, I admit that even a white replica of the super-innocent calf (cows are innocent and therefore calves are super-innocent) might be a source of embarrassment on ecclesiastical grounds. To be sure, certain highly enlightened congregations, urban and crowded with culture, belonging mayhap to the Unitarian or Christian-Scientific communions, might well adopt my suggestion without any damage and perhaps with spiritual profit. But I do not insist upon the point. However, I do insist that, if the cow is not to come into the church, the church should go out to the cow. In other words the modern church should push out into the countryside in a very vigorous manner, opening herself to its influence as well as bringing her own to bear upon it.

II

In early days in Europe pagan temples and afterwards Christian temples, particularly monastic churches, were erected in more or less open places — in localities which, at least when compared with the modern city, were scantily inhabited. And there today, with the thin surrounding population thinned away into air, many of them are still to be seen, in ruins, in tilted blocks and thick pillars and fine shafts, in round and pointed arches; utterly opened to Nature now; while modern churches in nearby cities are increasingly shut away from her, packed into populations that every day grow denser. . . . On a certain evening some years ago, after visiting the ruins of a monastic cathedral in a lovely open countryside not far from London, I happened to dine with the rector of a church that stood jammed amidst the shops, warehouses, and tenements of a slummy square near the centre of the city. "I have to keep fighting for my lights", he declared, in a phrase that was unintentionally but significantly ambiguous. I knew that he was battling against heavy odds to establish his Christian message in the souls of that dingy neighbourhood; but he meant that only through bellicose vigilance was he able to prevent new walls of "the Wen", as Cobbett called London, from cutting off entirely the sparse rays of light that managed to enter the windows of his church. I thought of the sunlight flooding the beautiful, roofless, meadow-girt ruin not many miles away.

Decadent or weak in the country and with her "lights" often dimmed in the city, the Church has erred from nature along with industrial civilization. To be sure, the Church – by which I mean organized and official religion of all kinds and in all times – was in early days far too pagan; that is, too rural, or, at worst, too naturalized. In the pagan cities of the Roman Empire the "Church", no longer vitally rustic, was falsely naturalized. Hence when Christianity gained control of her, it was natural for her to aspire intensely above nature and, in some degree, away from nature. And it was natural in the later Middle Ages for the new commercial town to cluster below the cathedral spire, as commerce should centre in religion. But to cluster around a church is one thing, to swamp it with civic construction is another. Owing to the industrial revolution and to the sins of the Church herself, she is now deluged with urbanity. In their recognition of that bad fact, our advanced religionists, those who advocate "nature", are right; but their ways of remedying it are wrong. They themselves are fatally urbanized and one sees that they are reacting violently from themselves. The spectacle of ministers in pulpits shut off from the country by several square miles of stores, banks, factories, and residences, preaching that religion should be natural, is a very unnatural spectacle. The naturalistic doctrines that these men adore recall the hopeless nature-gods of the sophisticated cities of the Roman Empire.

The true pagan health that belongs to the life of the Church can be recovered and developed only when she lives and works and thinks as fully in the country as in the city. Nor otherwise can modern society be cured of its urban heart-disease; for where society worships, worships corporately, there in the long run will its heart be also. Certainly the Church must maintain her civic altars together with that urbane reason, slow result of the ages, which, under the Grace of God, freed her from the primitive yoke of nature, and enabled her eventually to comprise the physical universe in catholic religious philosophy; notably that of St. Thomas Aquinas. But in the thirteenth century nature had not yet been dissected and mechanized by that civilian science and industry which the Church did so much to foster; the country was still far from being outweighed by the city. The angelic philosopher came at a happy moment for a true vista of nature. Aquinas, incidentally, knew the country before he knew the city; whereas many religious thinkers today know Aquinas before they know the country; if they know Aquinas at all. Many of them believe that he has been rendered obsolete by modern civic naturalism. . . . The modern revival of rural monasticism, inside and outside of the Roman Catholic Church, can do much to restore the pagan health of religion (I am using the word "pagan", of course, in its etymological sense) if the monks become and remain, as they failed to do of yore, real farmers and herdsmen, material and spiritual shepherds. But the problem is far wider than that and it ought to engage the attention of all branches of the Church, especially in the United States.

III

In the early nineteenth century it could still seem likely that America was destined to readjust the face of the earth by balancing the overgrowing old-world cities with her vast open spaces. These allured the discontented imaginations of Europe. Chateaubriand came to our wilds to indulge his questionable nature-worship. Byron did not come but sent his oratorical fancy diving

> *Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the roar*
> *Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled*
> *On Infant Washington . . . .*

And it was natural and reasonable that Jefferson and others should envisage the future United States as a great federation of agricultural communities. Such an America would indeed have counterpoised citified Europe and made the look of the globe more natural again. But ironically enough our great woods and open spaces, by opening the American mind and making it very impressible, and by stimulating its practical and pioneering faculty while offering untold stores of the raw materials of industry, opened us wide to the influence of European industrialism and lured us to carry this to an extraordinary extreme.

So it appears that our mighty wilds, once adored by Europeans, have promoted a phenomenon now deplored by Europeans — the Americanization of Europe. However, the original sin, which those mourners should mainly bewail, was the Europeanizing of America. She is giving back to Europe that which Europe taught her but she has bettered the instruction. The two grand discoveries made by modern Europe, the continent of America and the religion of material success, might have served providentially to counteract each other. No doubt those two achievements were congenitally related but certainly they were not foredoomed to coalesce entirely. They were first cousins, let's say, at birth; but through a series of rebirths due to occidental "progress" they have now become Siamese twins. That morbid bond is ripe for cutting; and American surgery is called for. Many of our citizens are fired with a desire to help mankind at large in ways which seem more kindly than that sharp operation. But surely in the long run America may best serve the world by severe efforts at home, efforts inevitably long and painful, to dissolve her unnatural ties with the cult of factory-progress and to sculpture out from her vast raw materials her own true character.

Accordingly the popular cry for a "hundred-per-cent Americanism" ought to be refined and directed, rather than ridiculed, by our American intellectuals; whose ideas on the whole are abnormally exotic though their country has now an abnormal need of indigenous thinking. Such thinking can be as open to the inpour of foreign ideas as the soil is to the rain, but it must transform them entirely, as the growths of the soil transform the rain, through constant native working. Our traditional foreign policy of avoiding foreign entanglements should appear as the historic symbol of a new endeavour to solve our domestic tangle, our feverish urban muddle foreign to the nature of the land. The land has been so foreignized by the quick inrush of the nations that an exceptional detachment is the right course now for America so long as it means, not a formal and sterile isolation, but a vital process of isolating (in the chemical sense of the word) the land's true personality. America, discovered from without, must be rediscovered from within; settled from across the seas, she must be resettled by Americans. And any attempts on her part at improving the world's features will always seem somewhat unnatural until she succeeds in finding her own natural aspect.

The skyscraper, regarded in Europe as the symbol of America, should be regarded in America as a late symbol of Europe, as an offshoot and upshoot of the European lust of size and power in a land where new towns afforded sites and the earth sufficient iron ore. The thing is absurdly anomalous on the surface of this wide country, which absorbs and belittles it to next to nothing. It is no more outstanding than a needle stuck in an acre, for a truly American vision. But for European eyes (on either side of the ocean) the needle blots out the landscape, looming up as the spire of the latest European religion; gazed at with pious horror; dominating the whole of the American skyline as fully as it does the skyline of New York – a city which, because it stands for Europe in America, is America in the eyes of Europe. The soul of the skyscraper was engendered in London, mainly, but its body could not be born there: the skyline was preoccupied with the steeples and domes of an older religion; and the dubious soil beneath, threatening to give way under St. Paul's Cathedral, could not sustain the additional load of the Empire State Building. This had to take bodily form in New York; where, by a geologic accident full of religious meaning, the ground was a long, narrow rock inviting long-up, narrow buildings.

That rock, of course, was not counted on by our early European settlers. On the contrary many of them had in their hearts the deep cry of the Psalmist: "God is the rock of my heart, and my portion forever." But in the hearts of their successors "God" was changed to "New York". Historians have recently shown how the energia of Protestantism produced the modern gospel of material work and profit, notably in America. Thus a peripheral speck of the new gigantic continent, a tiny bucktooth of rock, an insignificant jut from the face of the plains and mountains was transformed by religious magic into the civil promontory now known as New York. Unlike old York, or old Amsterdam, which, however much commercialized during the modern era, are nevertheless deep-rooted in the countries to which they belong, this new city is a radical distortion of the land. It is a natural projection, not of the American continent, but of the dominant religion of our early European immigrants. The New Jerusalem they came to build eventuated in New York. Like this city, the profile of their faith was hard, narrow, and lofty; the spires and domes of elder cults were overtopped by its skyline. At its best it was noble. Its bleakness has been exaggerated by up-to-date Americans who do not see how much bleaker is its modern fungoid offspring, the cultus of Manhattan. The faithful for whom the life of New York is just the reverse of bleak should try to grasp the fact that such was the case of Puritanism for the faithful. In fact, the deceased village of Boston, studied and revived by regardful imagination, appears fertile and warm if placed alongside New York City. But alongside America, the true face of America, they both look bleak and meagre. American civilization was erected by a faith far too narrow for the land.

IV

That fact, no doubt, is more or less true of every civilization; but ours is the extreme example. The older civilizations, including the European, the youngest of them all, expanded their narrow beginnings in a manner closely related to the deliberation of Nature. The prehistoric Asiatics who gradually discovered Europe, permeating forests and reaching coastlines novel and vast to them, adapted their ancient cults to the nature of the new continent in a vitally gradual manner. They developed their religion slowly as they slowly developed the face of the land. At length they were ready for Christianity when, following them from Asia, it overcame and fed upon rites and philosophies akin to it in spirit. Thus through long centuries, twelve after Christ and as many and more before Him, the Eurasians built a religion catholic enough for Europe. Conceivably a similar development could have taken place in America—if those Asiatics who chose to cross the Behring isthmus, becoming the Amerindians, had been followed by other and ever deeper waves of immigration reaching back as far as Mediterranean shores; if early Europe and Christianity had come to America through slow Asia. But the sea cut America from Asia, though not insuperably, and man cut Asia from Europe; thwarting thus a natural eastward circulation of Eurasian culture. America, left primitive, was a powerful hidden conductor to which eventually the pent-up energy of Europe suddenly flashed over. The civilizing of America, seen against the background of the aeons of Eurasian growth, is an amazing short circuit. Here the process of civilization, hitherto a wave or a slow tide, becomes an electric current; swift and thrilling enough and mighty in its way, but too mechanic and straitened.

Certainly that particular jet of old-world energy which, after making the unprecedented and exhilarating leap to the New World, could there overtop all other forces whether old or new, had to be extremely powerful and correspondingly narrow. It had to be a tense concentration of the vital, catholic culture of Europe in one special direction. It had to be something like what it actually was, or became – Industrious Protestantism. But this great cult was better fitted for rapidly exploiting the resources of a new soil than for the full discovery of the spirit of a new country. No doubt the intense supernatural light that Puritanism threw upon our stony northeast coast was a beginning of the revealing of a higher self for America. But to incarnate that self in the very flesh of the land, to cultivate the supernatural life in and through the natural life, to maintain the height of the Christian faith while rebuilding the Church in vital correspondence with the vast and complex face of the new land and nation – that task was far too large for Industrious Protestantism. That cult could cover, but could not discover, America.

Europe discovered America as the lightning discovers an oak, and America has not yet succeeded in recovering from that discovery. Her natural growth has proceeded only in a maimed fashion, while she has provided handy and abundant timber for the rehousing of old-world cults. So far she is the land of sects, of extreme creeds and extreme reactions, and of narrow attempts at being broad-minded. For her civil history coincides with the violent sectionalizing of the European mind. Europe in the Middle Ages broadened and solidified in the finding of herself; then split into strenuous cults, religious, tribal, economic, in the finding of America. Ancient Europe absorbed St. Paul and went on to St. Thomas Aquinas with his wide and sound grasp of nature in relation to supernature. But presently the Pauline theories re-erupted in a form prodigiously unnatural in the work of John Calvin, and overflowed to America. Europe, though badly shaken by the Calvinistic spirit (in the most inclusive sense of this term), could in time digest the portent because of her catholic training. She could make the grass grow pretty well over the Calvinistic lava. Not so America, in spite of her great prairies. She was Calvinized, and galvanized, into civilization; and her mind still suffers badly from Calvinistic galvanism.

In other words, this America, this grand new front of nature, was occupied most determinedly by men who were determinedly reacting from nature. This vast and fecund section of the Earth's temperate zone — which, unlike the rest of that zone, had missed its natural period of pagan civilization – called for a Christianity with plenty of pagan blood in its veins and a pagan breadth of imagination; instead of a Christianity that was trying to extrude from its spirit and its forms every last pagan element. The dark religious gulf between the early and the late Eurasian settlers in America – that is, between the Indians and the New Englanders – signifies a dark hiatus in natural American history. And the treatment accorded the natives in the past three centuries by us newcomers is indicative of our treatment, so extremely brash and fickle, of American nature in general, nature physical and spiritual. We have exploited and wasted her and sentimentalized over her, pummelled her piously and indulged her violently, veneered and venerealized her. By now we have done about everything to her except understand and control her with native religious capacity. We shall not come to right terms with her, mentally and aesthetically, morally and economically, until we achieve a scope of religious thought and technique comparable to that attained by Europe in the height of the Middle Ages – and yet, truly American.

V

We Americans must never cease to hear the clarion call of Emerson for a fresh, large spirituality to match and comprehend the breadth of nature in America. But we have to leave behind his blindness to the fact that the consummation he so devoutly wished is impossible without the Church – without socially organic and organized religion. While Emerson as a young man was breaking with the Church and deciding that religion was "not now tending to a cult", a powerful cult called the Oxford Movement was incubating in England; and in many other ways Christianity was preparing to renew her depleted institutional life. But the greatest of American writers had a great suspicion of religious institutionalism, partly because he was an American, partly because he was Emerson. Moreover, a certain thriving cult to which he unwittingly belonged had as one of its mainsprings – with fundamental irony – a strong aversion to cults.

The cult of ideal individualism that rose in the seventeenth century, flowered in the eighteenth, fruited in the nineteenth, and rotted in the twentieth, is responsible for the dream that religion can flourish without the Church, citizenship without the Nation, art without the Art Tradition, and knowledge without the College; *i.e.*, that the most reliable insight into the meaning of life is obtained by a sort of intuition hostile to organized intellectual effort. Such was the hasty and vivid dream. But the very latest findings of sociological anthropology, confirmed by the latest events on the stage of human history, remind us of the fact that from first to last man is an institutional animal. To conceive of "man and nature" over against institutions is to make an abstraction from nature: institutions are nature. When man makes a strenuous effort to be more natural, he alters his institutions, for better or for worse. When he alters them for the better he becomes more highly natural.

It is unnatural to try to be natural by being non-institutional, and the self-reliance thus acquired is distinctly unreliable. Human personality results from human institutions and can grow above them only in proportion as it is deeply rooted in them. To rise above institutional life, in a real instead of illusory fashion, is to be as much a part of it as a tree is of the land. This is a true enough image for the life of a great man; and it serves to correct the hyperboles of Romantic individualism in regard to the nature of genius. Carlyle, for instance, preached that "the Hero is a free force direct from God's own hand". But this doctrine, true of the Holy Ghost, is not true of human persons however great they may be. It emblemizes a spiritual truth, but it is not that historical truth which Carlyle, by confusing two realms of thought, deemed it to be. While rejecting metaphysics in favour of the historical method he maintained a metaphysical view of the great men of history. He conceived them as pre-created and thrust into the human drama in a catastrophic fashion; which his amazing imagination strove to picture as natural, or, to adopt his own phrase, as supernaturally natural; weaving across the rift in his thought a tense and many-coloured web of persons and events. But great men become unbelievable and history, which Carlyle proclaimed a divine revelation, appears an insubstantial pageant unless great men and history are seen to be correlative; unless Heroes are created in and through human institutions; unless history makes great men as much as they make history.

Carlyle loved history not wisely but too well; his violent embrace of it was like to strangle its meaning, and certainly helped to do so for his chief friend in America. Emerson in any case loved history not at all and thought we Americans would do well to leave it well behind us. And indeed in his time the story of America could easily seem unique enough to disqualify history – and heroic enough to disqualify the uniqueness of Heroes. Therefore Carlyle's laudation of great men was transferred by Emerson to the human spirit in general, much to Carlyle's dismay. The aristocratic thunders uttered by the older prophet, the Elijah of Craigenputtock, were followed hard upon by the democratic lightnings, so serenely violent, of the Elisha dwelling in Concord. Carlyle confused Time and Eternity, history and metaphysics, in favour of great men. Emerson did so on behalf of general human nature. In a way Emerson's vision was deeper than his friend's. If Carlyle gave to Heroes what was due to the Holy Ghost, Emerson certainly endeavoured to give the Holy Ghost his due; but unfortunately he was apt to confuse the Holy Spirit with the human spirit in general. The "Soul", his favourite entity, is not the simple unity that his unitarian genius conceived it to be. Emerson's "Soul" is a flexible combination of God, man, nature, and Emerson; lofty and pure in purport but yet an unholy mixture unless holily employed. Emerson so employed it. But America, including Walt Whitman, Emerson's most vivid disciple, happens to be, on a rough calculation, ninety per cent unholy.

Emerson's religious book on *Nature*, written just a hundred years ago, his first important work and containing in embryo all the rest, is a new and great chapter of Occidental scripture. In form it is a loose, ebullient sketch, but the outline it gives to its subject is grander than that attained by the writer's master, Wordsworth, or by any of the other leading Romantic naturists. They surpassed Emerson in the architecture of verse and prose, but could not equal him in the noble comprehensiveness of his treatment of nature, ranging from critical shrewdness to high mystical insight. But although comparatively catholic in its version of nature, the book is quite uncatholic in the nature of its religion. Institutional religion is lightly daffed aside while nature is erected into a religious institution. The Introduction summons Americans away from religious tradition; but the final chapter summons George Herbert, the Anglican cleric of the seventeenth century, to testify on behalf of the religious tradition of nature – Herbert, whose nature-poetry is a fine flower on the tree of Catholic Christianity. Also, the prophetic power of Emerson himself was nourished under the surface, as his writings frequently hint, by the roots of that same tree. Nature could be a great church for him because a great church had embraced nature.

Certainly Emerson's prophecy can come true. Certainly in new America, as in old Europe and Asia, nature can become a religious institution; but not without the aid of institutional religion. Perhaps there has never been such a great and spiritual person who was at the same time so unsympathetic as Emerson to the constant human necessity of historical religion. Some causes of this phenomenon have been adduced above. But here it must be added that throughout his long life Emerson was dazzled by the brilliant discovery, made when he was a young pastor – and hard, as a rule, for young pastors to make at that time in New England – the discovery of the remarkable discrepancy between organic religion and organic nature in the land in which he found himself. He could admire at a distance the catholic forms of the Christian faith.

In a passage of his diary, written a dozen years after his religious book on *Nature*, he declares that the Catholic Church is superior to Protestantism because of being "in harmony with Nature" (*Journals*, Vol. VII, pp. 341-2). But he found no church, and conceived of none, equal to the great America expanding before his eyes. He reacted extremely from the narrow church of his ancestors. In doing so, however, he carried on its narrowness in a changed fashion. Its straitness of creed became in him a straitness of imagination. In trying to expand and naturalize the Puritan theology he lost what scope the Puritans had of religious imagination. Puritanism, a great church in its way, a vital branch of the Christian Communion, had a vivid apprehension of that historic and social corpus which, whatever else it may be, is the most broadly human of all religious symbols. But Emerson restricted his religious symbols, unnaturally, to nature. His most spiritual paragraphs, if read alongside passages from the chief Puritan divines, appear inhumanly meagre in their imaginative cast – except in the eyes of readers whose religious instincts have been desiccated by Emersonian individualism.

This, in one form or another, became the prevalent credo of the American mind, while the American heart was going in for the much more dramatic religion of industrial achievement. New York took our fancy while Boston kept hold of our mind. As the railways pushed inland in the middle of the past century, Emerson extended his lecture tours further and further westward. Boston, so to speak, was making a valiant effort to spiritualize our locomotion and, at the same time, to expand her own religious mind in response to the new national life. But the task was too large and difficult for the time, and for Boston. She did indeed extend and quicken her spiritual "intellection" (Emerson's significant word) but only by attenuating a far more vital function of the mind, the religious imagination. And now the other and vivider cult, the religion of mass-production, is also losing its hold on our imagination. Two tall spires, each handsome in its way, are retreating to our rear horizon — the steel skyscraper of New York and the spiritual one of Boston. Each has now an air of static aspiration. And both of these cults go back to the fact that American civility, built up with unnatural speed, was originated by a species of European Christianity far too narrow for the land.

VI

American religion, if it is to become catholic enough for America, must learn a great deal from nature on the one hand and, on the other, from the Middle Ages. Those two ways of learning, so far from being incompatible, are complementary to each other; they can aid and correct each other. Religion when truly catholic is never divorced from nature but always hostile to theories that confuse nature and deity. Such theories are opposed by nature itself when nature is plainly and normally known. They are the perennial product of partial views of nature combined with attenuated, and often disguised, religious emotion. Modern naturism, emanating from the studios, parlours, and parks of European or Europeanized society, is foreign to the native genius of America. It has no roots, excepting those created by sentimental fancy, in the American soil. Walt Whitman as a nature-priest was a European lounger in America; hence his intense appeal to European studios. His variety of religion was no more truly American than that of the deistic Indian of Pope's *Essay on Man.* The actual religion of our Indians, as recent scholars have more and more shown, was normally theistic, and sometimes nobly so; and the same was the case of our frontiersmen. Pantheistic naturism is the product of the studio. Practical and vital contact with nature fosters the conception of God that characterizes catholic religion.

To encourage that kind of contact with nature should surely be a main concern of the Church, of organized religion in all its branches, particularly in America. Just now our Catholics, Protestants, and Jews are undertaking a strong crusade against the immoral moving-picture. But this evil is merely one of the surface results, albeit the most picturesque, of the immoral urbanization of American society. The American moving-picture is so often immoral because the American countryside has become for most of our citizens nothing but a moving-picture. They dash across it hither and thither in vehicles of ever increasing speed on paved ways or through the air; or, seated in the movie-palace, they watch it "jittering" across the screen. Its grandeur and repose escape them except in sentimental moments which do not affect their lives. America, just five centuries ago a quiet and slow quarter of the world, devoid even of horses, is now the world's chief symbol of noise and crowd and speed. And this disorder has heavily infected American religion. Therefore the numerous church-goers who are now (so it is reported) boycotting moving-pictures should employ the leisure, thus attained, in contemplating critically the moving-picture spirit that there is in our churches. That spirit is of the city, the abnormal American city; and the Church can effectually counteract it only when she sets herself to live and work and think in vital contact with the soil.

The particular measures necessary to bring about that end can be determined only by our religious leaders. Any suggestions offered by a mere literary onlooker, especially by one enjoying a summer vacation, would be likely to appear somewhat trivial or visionary. Two projects, however, insist on coming to my mind. I should like to call them practical; but as I contemplate them I feel myself relapsing towards that mood of comparative levity in which this rumination began.

First I would urge that no more cathedrals or other great religious structures should be erected in our cities. Every citizen asked to contribute to a grand new church or synagogue should stipulate that it be placed at least ten miles from the nearest town in the midst of a hundred acres of grounds, with adequate provision for the transport of car-less worshippers. Of course the design of the edifice would harmonize with the countryside; the architect would be encouraged to imitate nature afresh, forgetting the factory-lines that have of late been creeping into ecclesiastic architecture. This project would open a clear channel for the vast religious energies which we Americans have devoted to programmes that have proved to be far less practicable, such as World Peace and Prohibition. Thus the United States would gradually become dotted with noble rural temples – living successors to the ruined ones that our tourists admire on old-world landscapes; successors, too, of those vanished shrines all over the wild face of the land where the Great Spirit, and lesser spirits, were worshipped by congregations of the aboriginal American Church, that of the Indians.

My second and more important suggestion is that our religious workers should engage so far as possible in the working of the soil. Emerson tried to be a farmer and lamented that he was an ill one. More lamentable is the fact that his ecclesiastic successors, our advanced and gifted preachers who are trying to naturalize religion, are not farmers at all. They speak from pulpits embedded in acres of concrete, stone, and steel. Their contact with nature, outside of cities and books, is that of summer vacations. Now, a summer vacation is a natural and proper thing for men of letters who believe in ecclesiastic tradition, but not for ecclesiastics who disdain that tradition and believe mainly in nature. Vacational contemplation of nature, even when accompanied by ardent golf and boating, can give us only the surfaces and the sentiment of nature. The true foundation of naturalistic religion has always been and will always be plain economic toil in forest and in field, closely interfused with the spirit of meditation and worship. Nowadays when that toil and that spirit are so widely sundered, surely the sort of ministers to whom I am referring should be the first of all to throw themselves into the breach. The saintliest of their number should immolate themselves on the altar of this cause by getting themselves transferred from urban to rustic parishes. All of them, disdaining the traditional summer vacation as ardently as they disdain the traditional dogmas of the Church, should purchase modest farms – ploughland, pasture, woodlot – and resort thither for labour on every possible occasion. They should become familiar with spade, axe, and hoe, and they should learn the seats of harrows, reapers, and milking-stools.

If this great example were set by our naturistic preachers it would have an immense effect upon the Church in general. The cry "Back to the soil!" would loudly resound from the throats of bishops, priests, rabbis, deacons, and other ministers – including, I trust, the leaders of Buchmanism or the Oxford Group Movement, the most striking religious cult in America at the present moment. The good results it has achieved can render a brooding onlooker tolerant of its strident ways, its public confessions and "go-getting" conversions. Organic religion, after all, must use contemporary organs; and lurid advertising is better employed in saving our souls than in making us spend more money on the cigarettes that perish. Fire must often be fought with fire. But in this case the scene will presently be mere ashes unless great care is taken to foster the growth of slow, living things in the wake of the rapid fire. And as a matter of historic fact every religious movement that has been sufficiently inspired and enlightened by the authentic flame has presently found methods of counteracting its own extremes. Early Christianity produced a wild speaking with tongues, but soon it produced a St. Paul to articulate and steady that first fine careless rapture – notably in the free and wayward western outpost of Corinth. Westward the course of loud-speaking, apparently, takes its way. Well, the leaders of our

Buchmanism, by way of counteracting its exhausting noisiness without chilling the warm truth of its spirit, should try to induce many of its converts to devote themselves to a period of laconic labour on farms. Some of these persons would no doubt develop into permanent rural saints, influencing the population more by example than by speech. What America needs today is agricultural hermits. And we shall be sure that Buchmanism is an integral, saving part of our American life as soon as we see many Buchmanites silently milking cows.

VII

The Cow, the Church, the United States – a thoughtless reader might complain that these are queer topics for a rumination on nature. But a prophetic reader will perceive that those three natural institutions are bound to bulk large in the period just ahead of us. They are the three main aspects that the riddling visage of the old Sphinx wears for us at present. Man's endless task and adventure in the unfolding of nature will go awry in the twentieth century unless he attends wisely to those three features of nature. What meaning have they in common? What will America do to the Church and to the Cow, and what will they do to America? Our fate hangs on the answer. The trend of modern society in all parts of the globe will be very largely determined by the extent to which we find the right interrelation of those three institutions, America, Church, and Cow.

"For Earth, that gives the milk, the spirit gives. . . ." So sang George Meredith, the last (he was nine years younger than Whitman) of the chief modern nature-poets. Like the others he was so intoxicate of the new "milk" he was drawing from Earth that he found it easy to fancy that the "spirit" – all of it, not just some of it – came from Earth too. That was a natural error. A lusty infant whose mother's breasts have proved to be inadequate for him, and whose growth is therefore ministered to by a Guernsey in the neighbourhood, would exclaim, if he could think like Meredith, "The cow, that gives the milk, the spirit gives" – nature, who mothers my lustihood, is the mother of my soul. However, as a matter of fact, the Christian Church, rather than nature, is the mother of modern nature-poetry. But at the time when she was suckling it her health was decidedly below par; she was weak with schism and dry with controversy. In the twelfth century she had been able to absorb and Christianize the earthy muse of the troubadours. But in the eighteenth century she could not retain in her embrace the modern interest in nature which she had initially inspired. Therefore the new poets more and more transferred "the spirit" from Christianity over into the realm of nature, mixing it with "the milk". And as late as the time of Meredith – but no later, I think – an excellent, mature, and comprehensive mind could still deem modern naturism more catholic in its outlook than the genius of Christianity. Meredith in 1880 could write sincerely and solemnly the line I have quoted above; no *Meredith* could do so today.

Emerson could chant in his Concord: "Over me soars the eternal sky, full of light and of deity. . . ." "Of cosmic rays and of theory", we should have to write it today. Today natural science, more competent than ever in the realm of investigation, has become fatally crude and confused in its metaphysical notions. The same condition appears on the practical plane in our economic confusion. Our immense material progress during the past three centuries has merely intensified the problem that Shakespeare saw three centuries ago: "Distribution should undo excess and each man have enough." Our immense accumulation of scientific knowledge has brought about at the same time a revival of the primitive metaphysical methods of pre-Socratic Greece. Windy heads and empty bellies — these are the natural results of an amazing scientific and economic grasp of nature attained on the merely natural level. Surely the modern age has thoroughly demonstrated the fact that nature cannot be truly understood and utilized apart from the supernatural, and that the supernatural cannot be socially real without the agency of the Church. Apart from the organized social effort at apprehending God, man in society loses the way of comprehending nature. The beautiful words of Emerson, cited above, recalling as they do the sublimer words of the Nineteenth Psalm, are at once reminiscent of and prophetic of the Temple.

The Distributist

HILARY PEPLER

THE reforming instinct is part of the make-up of an Englishman, usually it has cost him dear. Our capacity for minding other people's business and our own profits is hardly beaten, even by the French. This state of soul has its virtues. We practise reform at home – the rich scheme for the poor, the poor plan for the removal of the rich, doctors and journalists provide for everyone. These plannings are not always merely on paper; they often find their expression in experiment and practical work, because the reformer is motived by a sense of patriotism, of patronage, of superiority . . . *noblesse oblige*. Service for the public is a recognized obligation among the well-to-do, especially if they be well born with a family tradition behind them. Experience has led us to keep as much of the old as possible, though we disagree as to what is possible, rather than to destroy before beginning to rebuild. Hence the appearance of patchwork in many of our measures.

By the "well-to-do" I mean the average middle-class man who has made the two ends meet. For example, Chesterton, who probably earns enough by his pen to justify his taste for the suburbs, to enable him to hire a taxi when it rains, and to afford the hobby of "distributism" – even to meeting the deficit on *G. K.'s Weekly* – and the financing of unprofitable fads. My earliest association with him was in pre-War days when attempting the uplift of my neighbours through the running of a Club for Working Men. He lectured for us without fee. It may be guessed that I was also brought up in this reforming atmosphere. For the last thirty years of his life my grandfather devoted all his energies to the affairs of the City of London and would have been a Lord Mayor but that his fortune did not run to the £80,000 which one year of that office costs. I mention this in no spirit of vainglory but to illustrate a difference I detect between English and American ideas of municipal honours. Though a number of minor Mayors may make something out of their office it is a costly privilege for the majority, whereas (unless common report lies more than it usually does) the reverse has usually been the case in your country.

There are always a number of men ready to give their services for experiments in government in order to preserve the existing society even while preparing to supersede it. Among them is both the theorist dreaming of Utopias and the worker who despises him, the dreamer naturally outnumbering the doer; but my point is that whenever a policy or proposition is put forward it will be found to have links with some practical experience.

In moving among "distributist" circles one would perhaps be surprised at the number who are not content simply to dream, who believe that there should be a relation between the theory and the facts of daily life which is patient of immediate trial. Chesterton has been preaching sanity for over thirty years – it is in no small measure due to his word and example that the "public house" (American *saloon*) has become a place of fellowship rather than a mere drinking den; that the despised "little Englander" of the Boer War became powerful enough to make the inclusion of South Africa within the British Commonwealth of Nations first a possibility and then a fact; that the status of the Peer by purchase differs in the public eye from the Peer by birth, even though he but inherits a title secured by earlier robbers. There are "land" colonies few of which would have come into being but for these years of "distributive" propaganda; there are men working with their hands who would have been clerks; there are craft groups and coteries of those who aim at a life relatively independent of the industrialism which Chesterton has so consistently condemned. He would of course be the first to repudiate the suggestion of his responsibility for these things; we do not forget his brilliant brother Cecil, Belloc, and even Shaw, not to mention forerunners from Blessed Thomas More to William Morris. It is not my purpose to credit him with a leadership he does not claim. He is perhaps no more than a voice crying in the wilderness, while those who come to him are directed to a greater than he. . . . Yet it is just this which distinguishes his work from that of others who want to see their followers shirted and labelled in the mass.

Chesterton's value to our generation can only become apparent when the moving wheel has turned on a spoke or two and we can see him and our own day in perspective. What now concerns us is the present —what have English distributists learnt from the crisis of the depression, how do they react to the apparent recovery? But in the use of that adjective I have answered the second question. As to the first I would say that of the lessons we have been taught there is one which has got home among many beyond the small circle of distributists. It could be summoned up in the one word USURY. Among the many discussions about machinery, a return to the land, craftsmanship, laws of compulsory insurance and education, there has been wide difference of opinion; but we all cry with Hezekiah "Give up this Usury!" Yet what has the distributist *done* about it? Nothing, except to keep out of the mess as much as he can by seeing that such capital as he controls is in non-usurious undertakings and, if possible, in things which he himself can use profitably. In this there is not nor has been any concerted action; in so far as it has been done it has been done by individuals according to their own lights (or those of Mr. Belloc in his admirable discussions of Usury in such books as *Economics for Helen* and *Essays of a Catholic*); and doubtless the enemy has jeered and called it compromise.

This word *compromise* requires a note to itself. When I crossed America by air it was suggested that I compromised with modern industrialism. Now a compromise is an agreement between two persons to settle a difference of opinion by mutual concession. I have no difference of opinion with an airplane! On the other hand were I to lend money at usury I should be guilty of compromise, if not of sin, for it is an action over which I have direct control. My conscience and I would have made mutual concessions for my benefit. I cannot make or manage an airplane, oddly enough I can sometimes make and mismanage a few dollars. This may appear to be but a small point but it has so often been the occasion of annoyance, when people say "One must compromise", that I feel it necessary to protest. One dare not compromise with sin — that is, with one's own understanding of truth and right.

This point is normally understood by the distributist because of his individualism in which is the strength of the movement; it is not bound by rules and definitions which the pedant would impose. I can imagine Chesterton faced with the problem of Rules and replying that these can be considered when we have kept the Commandments. And he would not often mean that "we" to include others not on his side. It is true that a set of rules might more easily enable one to grasp what the movement stands for, so that Distributism could be offered to the President at critical moments when he has to handle usurers, gold hoarders, or other gangsters; but Chesterton answers "that in a free country social life acts even before social law". And while he is fighting for this freedom he is not concerned to dictate how it would operate, nor precisely with how it is to be achieved. Law follows custom and must emerge from necessity, experience, trial and error. It may be easy to say, "Thou shalt not lend money at usury", but the Church has already said it. The world having failed to be put right by Christianity is not likely to be more docile in the hands of Chesterton. Hence the distributist does not recite a new creed nor consider himself bound to a narrowly defined policy, he has not to debate within himself whether or not Chesterton's principles are compromised every time he uses a machine or licks a postage stamp. He is much more like a member of a family in which Gilbert is the indulgent father over children not yet grown up.

This is the bond that holds us together, we can distinguish between a state desired by sane men and one in the hands of evil men, and we know that the latter threatens our existence. Would it be simpler were the bond a coloured shirt to be seen of men? Chesterton is content with the answer, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Justice", which is the only bond that matters.

It seems to me that it is this which is at the foundation of Distributism, that it is this which is lacking in the policy of the state. Chesterton bids us, each in his own sphere, to take hold of this justice. Hence the effect of Distributism is only to be seen in the lives and actions of those who believe in the same truth. It has taken some men "back to the land", others to municipal and political work aiming to direct the laws of state and locality in consonance with this justice, others to home work for themselves rather than factory work for another, others to the study of the Popes and the Gospels – but all to a realization that – to quote one of your own poets –

> *They enslave their children's children*
> *Who make compromise with sin.*

It follows that the distributist is normally one who is of, or tends towards, the one religion where sin is recognized as an evil capable of definition and control, a failing which can be conquered by repentance. Nevertheless the movement includes many who would repudiate any suggestion of leanings towards Catholicism. An evidence not of compromise but of comprehension, for Chesterton sees the sign and shadow of the cross upon the back of every ass.

The men of the East may spell the stars,
And times and triumphs mark,
But the men signed of the Cross of Christ
Go gaily in the dark.

The Salvation of Aldous Huxley

P. H. Houston

Like all abstract nouns, salvation is a word of various meanings. To the orthodox Christian of whatever creed it denotes a belief in a personal Saviour and a Heavenly Father, loving, merciful, and just. An assurance of personal immortality and a humble recognition that God's purposes are inscrutable as He guides the destinies of the world to His own all-wise ends are also part of a Christian's faith. So the disturbing scepticism which afflicts our modern world must perforce break itself against the citadel of Divine revelation.

Many, however — an increasing number to-day — no longer yield their faith to a personal Deity nor believe that Divine purpose can be revealed to men. Yet a kind of salvation may come to them through experiences of a peculiar nature, whether mystical or otherwise. They may feel kinship with the type of meditation which penetrates straight through time and change to an Absolute which awaits the soul solitary and apart from the flux of circumstance. Such men may be profoundly pessimistic concerning the working out of material values, and their scepticism may be acute with regard to the hope of radical improvement in human affairs, for the only permanent significance, as they conceive of life, lies in contact with a realm beside which this one is mere illusion, a drop in the well of Infinite Being.

But even if one neither shares in Christian fellowship nor engages in solitary contemplation, personal salvation of still another sort is possible, if we mean by this word the ordering of one's life according to a pattern that spells integrity of character and centrality of thinking. This pattern is in its nature moral and human. Out of the discrete facts of life, if one will come to terms with his inner desires and try to comprehend the conflicting elements of his nature, he may discover sound distinctions between noble and base, and he may learn the means through which he may arrive at noble ends. This is essential humanism not of necessity related to religious dogma or mystical experience; and it is based on faith in oneself and in the possibility of creating a decent world. It is an appeal to the individual will, which respects traditional morality as the world's experience in matters of conduct, while recognizing the continued need of readjustment as each age outgrows the modes and forms of its predecessor. It is sceptical enough of the present, but it is an enemy of despair, for it believes in life and in the unchanging character of essential human nature.

All three of these several ways of personal salvation need not be unrelated to each other, for a Christian humanism has historical warrant and certainly every religion seeks as its highest reach that union with the Deity which is the object of all religious meditation; but all three are an integration of human life, a denial in the individual self of the meaningless welter of the outer world. Now Aldous Huxley's well-known hatred of every form of religiosity would bar his admittance to the category of Christianity, but to the discerning reader both humanism and an inclination towards mystical quietism seem to have more than a little claim upon his allegiance. These two sides of his inner life have evidently ripened as he has grown older, but they have been present in some degree from the beginning.

And yet in the first years of his literary activity he almost perfectly reflected the bitter torment of his generation as it faces a broken world without the will to make a better one. This brilliant young novelist, essayist, and poet has in the last dozen years undertaken to hold up a mirror to a society he hates in all its hideous reality – its futile striving, its homeless wandering through the paths of culture, and its wretched attempt to still its cravings for peace and purpose in the purposelessness of cold debauchery. So accurately has he reflected the spirit of his age that now, since the publication of *Point Counter Point* in 1928, his whole emancipated generation seems to have accepted him as their official spokesman before the world.

All of this seems unfortunate. For what to the superficial observer is but smart sophistication, a kind of dance of death before a mob of lost souls who exhibit an inverted relish for the thing the author excoriates, possesses a deeper significance to anyone who takes the trouble to look beneath the surface. Huxley's mind is subtle, his learning broad, and his own ideals of what constitutes a good life high; it is time, now that his numerous explosions of wrath against the objects of his detestation have been heard, that he give expression to his constructive thinking, in fictional guise if he likes; for only so can he afford these wanderers in the Waste Land of contemporary life some hope of eventual salvation – as salvation has been defined above.

II

By a curiously ironical circumstance Huxley carries in his veins the blood of two great Victorians who quarrelled over much the same group of ideas which has disturbed their descendant. When Matthew Arnold and Thomas Huxley engaged in their memorable debate over the nature and the limits of a liberal education, they set up the issues of a good deal of modern controversy. Aldous Huxley has in common with his great-uncle a love of culture which is even more comprehensive than the other's, but without that great humanist's moral energy; from his grandfather came his hard, sceptical mind. To these qualities he has added a sharp sense of reality and a bitter feeling that the modern world has failed in its efforts to realize any true vision of a good life.

After Eton and Oxford, from which failing eyesight almost excluded him, the young Huxley engaged in a variety of journalistic activities, producing dramatic, musical, and artistic criticism, a volume of short stories, and two volumes of verse. To a young man, sensitive to all the aesthetic winds blowing across the ancient seat of traditional learning which then cherished the memory of Oscar Wilde, it was an easy matter to absorb most of the cults which found in post-War England fertile ground for growth. France and Italy too – indeed the whole of Mediterranean culture he seems to have made his own, spending months of each year in southern Europe – have contributed their share to the formation of his intellect. Especially is this true of the Frenchman Jules Laforgue, who regarded the tragi-comedy of life as essentially chaotic and meaningless, tragic in its nature but not to be taken seriously. Soon he was contributing to *Wheels*, the organ of Cubist verse which the Sitwells were devoting to the new experimentation, and he has ever since been largely identified with that group.

The fact is that the terrifying experience of the War and the destructive effect accompanying it fell with tremendous impact upon a mind already open to whatever impression was keenest. In the years following that great tragedy, when disillusion and futility and despair attacked the English spirit, Huxley came to maturity. And so, impotent to follow the dictates of his inner nature and yet incapable of ignoring them, he chose to play the Thersites to his contemporaries, pointing the finger of scorn and grimly taking his revenge upon a mean and wretched world.

What was revealed to him as he studied the contemporary scene was an England hopelessly at war with herself. A conventional society, whose pattern was woven in a previous age when the relations between men had been organized in the light of rigidly held dogmas, issues from a senseless and disastrous war with its standards wrecked, its morale shattered, and its search for a new pattern of satisfactory living frustrated – a society in which maladjustment takes the place of normal life. What Huxley calls the "bitch-goddess Success" has combined with surviving but obsolete conventions to standardize the mass of the people, while those aware of themselves find endless talk and equally endless sensual indulgence the only outlet for their energies. With the loss of every guidepost for purposeful action, with folly and greed and a stupid Puritanism the prevailing incentives to conduct, with every outlet for passionate energy dammed up by loss of faith in themselves and in life itself, many sensitive men turned with cold anger upon their age and cursed the conditions under which they were born. No longer able to believe in outgrown values and sick with the knowledge of too many things, they have rebelled against all theories of life in the name of instinct. This was the way of D. H. Lawrence in his revolt against an over-developed intellectualism and an equally over-developed moral squeamishness. And this was the way of Aldous Huxley, though his own cultivated reason has rather been at war with sense and passion with no clear victory for either. Both men victims of nervous debility, they have sought compensation in a return to pagan vitalism, and both have sunk back in despair at their evident failure. Huxley's sensitive introduction to the *Letters* of Lawrence pays tribute to his inner vitality, his exaltation of sex as man's chief means of spiritual realization, and his consequent hatred of mere lust, and to a genius that cannot be resolved into rational terms. Huxley brings to the reader's attention his older friend's personal attraction, but he appears to reject Lawrence's fierce revolt into the realm of instinctive passion, for he never denies the sovereign value of reason nor the necessity of exercising the will in creating a worthy life. In this lies his particular hope of ultimate salvation, if he can ever resolve this conflict between passion and reason.

His first full-length novel seems the work of an adolescent scornfully painting a dirty and obscene world for the delectation of the very persons he detests. *Crome Yellow* (1921) is amusing enough but quite lacking in power to steer a way through the morass of contemporary life. Huxley here first employed what appears to be his favourite means of getting his ideas over to his public — a country house in which a group of cultivated sophisticates meet to engage in purposeless talk and equally purposeless sexual intrigue. These homeless victims of a dying social order are unconsciously made the objects of the author's bitter satire, but there is no comment and no direction. Why are we here, and what is the use of seeking a way out? they ask without hoping for an answer to their query. A young poet from the university where the God Whirl has usurped the place of serious study finds himself in the midst of this corrupting society, and learns to accept its philosophy of sensuality and ennui. *Antic Hay* (1923), second of the early novels, presents another group of human wastrels eternally talking to no purpose, suffering infinite boredom, and seeking escape through ever-repeated sense indulgence. Coarse and trivial and misanthropic, these men and women go their unlovely ways without resource of faith in any lofty or noble purpose. Seldom has English literature revealed more unrelieved depravity than in the persons of Mercaptan, Coleman, Rosie, and Myra Viveash. In Gumbril, Jr., the author may have adumbrated his own playing with ideas without any standard of reference. Self-analysis and introspection give way to lionlike exhibitionism when he wears a false beard and can then satisfy his amorous desires without the self-consciousness that vitiates his life.

The pathetic and yet disgusting despair of the poet-artist Lypiatt, the simplicity of Gumbril, Sr., and the innocence of Emily, too good for such a world, but set off the depravity of the others.

III

The second stage of Huxley's progress toward salvation begins with the publication of his first important novel, *Those Barren Leaves* (1925) and includes *Point Counter Point* (1928). Besides these have appeared several volumes of short stories and travel sketches (for Huxley has found one means of escape in visiting various parts of the world), at least three volumes of essays, and numerous brief comments on matters literary, philosophical, and artistic. One of the penalties of incessant publication is a not wholly merited reputation for superficial smartness and shallow learning.

Those Barren Leaves carries on the author's speculation about life and its futilities. Desperately seeking for permanent values in this bleak modern world, his lucid mind continues the discussion in talk of remarkably good quality. It never gets anywhere but it was never meant to. Morality, philosophy, science, the modern dilemma, are examined in turn and proved to be mere appearance; the conversation crackles and sparkles as the cultured and disillusioned talkers express their contempt for a world beyond the control of any individual or any form of life. Spiritual decay pervades the inconsequential group.

The scene is again a country house, this time a villa among the Italian hills owned by a wealthy Englishwoman who feels her youth slipping from her and therefore whips herself into new love moods. There we witness the Loves of the Parallels: between the lady, Mrs. Aldwinkle, and a young journalist from London, an affair which never quite comes off; between a self-conscious woman novelist of thirty, the type of passionless voluptuary Huxley particularly detests, and a Mr. Calamy, who despises his affairs with women and yet lacks the will to resist the appeal of his senses; between the elderly sensualist Cardan and a young half-witted English heiress whom he proposes to marry in order to protect his last years from the horror of poverty but who ironically dies before he can consummate his purpose; and between young Lord Hovenden and Irene, niece of Mrs. Aldwinkle, the only affair that remains natural and sweet, a kind of gentle commentary upon the sordidness of the others.

Mr. Cardan is the principal talker – a wonderful one, completely cultured and completely cynical, who serves as the author's mouthpiece. He discourses as one steeped in all the cultures of the world, a little weary of homelessness and parasitism but delighting in his mastery over ideas. Between this aged cynic, touched with the poison of having lived too long in a world from which value has departed, and young Chelifer, the journalist who is in process of adjustment to a life he tries not to understand, we may again find a revelation of Huxley's own inner nature – sense and reason at war, self-consciousness as man's worst enemy, and ultimate resolution of all things into pure scepticism. Two types whom Huxley detests are portrayed in this book: the charming but sensual girl who gives up her inhibitions for the sake of passionless love, and the *bon viveur*, cultivated and beyond the reach of moral restraint but perfectly adapted to this world of gentle irony and love and drink.

Only one character attempts to resist the miasmic corruption of this life. Richard Calamy has had many affairs of the heart, but he despises his sensual excesses and struggles to free himself from their bondage. Though he yields as usual, he at last flees into the forest to live alone until he can gain self-mastery, but even more to satisfy an insistent mystical sense of something beyond the sordid and trivial world he knows: a surprising conclusion that affords hope that the author believes that real values can again be discovered and held.

Point Counter Point, following in 1928, is Huxley's most important novel. Frustration and the clash of sense and reason again appear. The reader's first impression is of a lunatic world. Eternal talk continues throughout, involving the literary and artistic world of London. What characters Huxley paints – Walter Bidlake, weak and dissipated; his goatlike father, the Rabelaisian artist; Lucy Tantamount, abandoning herself, from ennui, to sexual excitement; Spandrell, a degenerate through rebellion against goodness who commits murder to satisfy his perverted cravings for artistic accomplishment and then perishes to the strains of a carefully selected phonograph record; Webley, an early portrait of a Fascist leader, half patriot and half charlatan; Ellidge, the communist rebel against the society that attracts him, who is led by Spandrell into a murder for which he has no inclination; and, most disgusting of all, Burlap, the sickly follower of St. Francis, creeping his slimy way to literary success.

And how lucidly they describe their own symptoms! How they strip themselves and the world of the infantilism and the hypocrisies which inherited but outgrown ideals have contributed towards the modern confusion! So the characters cross each other's paths, in a modern counterpoint, but here instead of harmony there are unresolved chords and broken rhythms. As Lord Edward declares, life comes to chemistry in the end. In the words of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, placed as a kind of musical prelude to the book:

> *Oh, wearisome conditions of humanity!*
> *Born under one law, to another bound,*
> *Vainly begot and yet forbidden vanity;*
> *Created sick, commanded to be sound.*
> *What meaneth Nature by these diverse laws,*
> *Passion and reason, self-division's cause?*

Inevitably we hark back to Arnold's dismayed prophecy:

> *This strange disease of modern life,*
> *With its sick hurry, its divided aims,*
> *Its head o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts . . .*

In two characters Huxley seems to have portrayed the two halves of his divided nature. Mark Rampion is in revolt against a civilization that vitiates every noble and generous impulse, the powerful and passionate elements of our nature. In place of will he would liberate the instincts through an equilibrium of balanced excesses. This Laurentian theme runs through the book, and, though Rampion talks earnestly and well and we are attracted sympathetically to his finely drawn figure and to that of his wife, his voice grows a bit hoarse as he recognizes the futile hope of pagan freedom in a world that denies to the individual any opportunity for the exercise of his powers.

Once before, in a short story called *After the Fireworks*, Huxley had given full utterance to this thought. As the middle-aged writer stands before a beautiful Etruscan statue, he explains to his adoring young companion the glorious sanity of the ancient world. Homer knew nothing of the separate existence of heroics and diabolics, for he was aware of both and accepted them as part of life. Men, not heroes, lived in his verse. No tragedy is in him; he is profoundly pessimistic but never tragic. He painted the sad, mysterious absurdity of the world without priggishness or sentimentality, and his men and women were complete and real. The great split came when life was broken into spirit and matter, heroics and diabolics, virtue and sin. Plato was the arch-seducer, and from him and from Euripides the descent was straight to the Stoics and the Neo-Platonists and to Christianity. Since then there has been no genuinely integrated man, but rather day-dreamers, masturbators, paranoiacs, weak fleers from responsibility.

The other character is Quarles the writer. Rampion realistically lived his facts, Quarles only thought his. Like Gumbril, Jr., he expresses a vacillating intellectualism, an aimless probing into every modern state of mind. He wishes to write a novel of ideas but he realizes that only a very small proportion of the human race is capable of entertaining ideas. His love for his wife has become so mixed with the complexities of his intellect that he is no longer capable of spontaneous emotion. He wishes to write a novel with a musical structure, a contrapuntal account of the aimless crossings of many lives as their various motifs contribute to the symphonic theme. His is the tragedy of a self-consciousness bred from over-intellectualism and a too highly developed culture – and so he loses the name of action. Thus is the Harlequin-Hamlet attitude of Laforgue and his modern followers fulfilled in one of the most brilliant of them all.

IV

Up to this point we have seen a young man, cultivated and clever, provoked to wrath against the monumental absurdities of an age offering little inducement to the realization of worthy ideals; and in revenge for his own bitter disillusion he has invented groups of his contemporaries who reveal their frustrations and degeneracies and despairs. But to aid us in comprehending the nature of his soul, he has also published several volumes of critical essays that reveal a sober mind endowed with an acute analytical faculty, strongly sceptical in its nature but really searching for some permanent foothold in the quagmire of contemporary thought. *Do What You Will* and *Proper Studies* appeared about five years ago and *Music at Night* two or three years later. The last of these is mellower in tone and gives promise of growing geniality, but it is less significant for our purpose than the first two. In the earliest, Huxley is trying to be the complete sceptic. The only facts we can know, he declares, are psychological ones, and one fact is as good as another. Therefore all dogmatic attitudes like Puritanism, which would suppress one vitally important side of our nature, must be avoided. We need to recognize the instinctive, the intuitive, and the passional as of equal value with the rational and the ethical if we would maintain a true balance in our lives. The Dionysian, the Panic, even the Phallic, as well as the Apollonian and the Minervan require cultivation if we would attain a full harmonious development. Monotheism and polytheism are equally necessary and true. The saints decay, while a humane people like the Greeks gave freedom to every vital activity, refusing to sacrifice body to spirit, and the Renaissance revived a polytheism which the Puritan Reformation succeeded in destroying. In its place we now have scientific intelligence in the service of business efficiency, the "bitch-goddess Success". The vital problem of the age is the reconciliation of a fully developed manhood with citizenship in a modern industrial state.

From these initial assumptions Huxley has turned his criticism upon various men and things. Infantile survivals of previous thinking, Puritanism, machine standardization accompanied by a mechanized leisure are things he detests. St. Francis he condemns for his rejection of vital, physical living; Pascal as an apostle of death who feared to seize life fiercely and greatly; Baudelaire for his Puritanism turned inside out, when he substituted debauchery for asceticism and subjected his body to just as senseless a torture; Wordsworth for his tepid Anglican pantheism, to remedy which he should have known the living hostility and peril of a tropical jungle; and Swift for his hatred of the human body. Concrete things he hates include the movies, church establishments, and revolutions, these last as the exaltation of the lowest human values and rule by the worst men.

To these hatreds and disgusts – and our Diogenes is never neutral – he would oppose whatever would increase vital power. Burns, Blake, Shakespeare, Mozart, Rubens, the early Tolstoi make one list of men he offers for our inspection. To these should be added Chaucer, Rabelais, the great men of the Renaissance – Essex, Marlowe, Donne, Elizabeth, Raleigh. Whitman is nowhere listed, and the name of Mozart causes one to wonder how he finds himself in this galley. Other Renaissance figures, such as Michelangelo, Lorenzo de' Medici, Leonardo da Vinci, Benvenuto Cellini, would doubtless meet with his approval. Blake as a moralist receives unstinted praise for seeing God in all vital processes and for upholding the desires and passions as something to be gratified as an end in themselves.

Huxley is, then, as he declares, a worshipper of life who accepts all the conflicting facts of human experience and from them tries to frame a way of life. Vital equilibrium, a balanced hostility, can be obtained only by opposing exuberances. Nothing significant was ever accomplished by moderation and compromise. We should go from excess to excess, one excess balancing another, for one state cannot be truer than another, and all the faculties of human life – sensuousness, beauty, love, intoxication, concupiscent life – are of equal value if we would discover a harmonious whole.

So the follower of Lawrence evolves his somewhat childish philosophy. But is this all? Not quite, or this essay could not have been written. *Proper Studies*, in the manner of Pope's famous line, deals with the human mind and its relation to the various aspects of living. The book, though practically contemporary with the other, seems the product of a maturer mind, at least a mind working upon its materials of reflection uninfluenced by an emotional revolt against certain objects of dislike. It is therefore better balanced, and the willingness is there to admit the argument on the other side of the case. Aldous Huxley is evidently growing up. He remains strongly sceptical with reference to ultimate truth, but in various ways he appears to place substantially greater value upon certain aspects of life than upon others. So hard is it for the sceptic to be true to himself. His discussion of the dogma of equality, placing it in its correct historical perspective, ridiculing current humanitarianism, and correlating modern behaviourism with eighteenth-century ideology, is almost wholly satisfactory. As he studies the varieties of intelligence, he notes the relative importance of the introvert and the extravert type of personality and expresses his doubt as to the possibility of making a final choice between the two. And yet incidentally he can say that a pure, even though refined, aestheticism robs art of all philosophical and moral significance, causing it to become in the end a horrible putrefaction. What do we read – philosophy and morality with respect to art? And this is not the only heresy we meet. We discover a positive preference for aristocracy; religion, though treated sceptically enough, finds a definite place in his scheme of things, and he inclines decidedly toward the more traditional forms as providing a wonderful compromise between asceticism and indulgence. Ritual and symbol in fact reveal their value in harnessing the discontinuous mind into some kind of unity. No more do we hear the nonsense about a balance between excesses but a sober facing of the problem of man's existence. Sex, for example, in Anatole France is a mere detached appetite, with no attempt to co-ordinate it with the other instincts. Proust indulged in self-contemplation but made no effort to make himself better. And orthodox religion and morality always provide an end which in turn guides the personality into a sort of self-harmony.

What Huxley suggests in these reflections is an inner harmony of soul which the individual in the midst of modern chaos may discover if he will. And by so doing he is actually finding his own personal salvation. Some principle of unity, purposive ideals different from a standardized humanity or the broken rhythm of revolt, even though these ideals must be sought in traditional materials selected and personally re-created to satisfy at once our intellect, our feelings, our imagination, our creative and directed will – this is the substance of Huxley's reflections. Today, he declares, there is no meaning to life, no pattern for imitation, only lasciviousness and disgust.

Two brief quotations will illustrate the kind of satisfaction he admires and is obviously seeking. Gumbril, Jr., whom we have already suggested as embodying many of the traits of his creator at that period of his life, muses aloud before the girl Emily, who seems to bring out the best that is in him:

> "There are quiet places in the heart. But we build bandstands and factories in them. Deliberately – to put a stop to the quietness. All the thoughts, all the preoccupations in my head – round and round continually. And the jazz

bands, the music hall songs, the boys shouting the news. What's it all for, what's it all for? To put an end to the quiet, to break it up and disperse it, to pretend at any cost it isn't there. Ah, but it is, it is there, in spite of everything. Lying awake at night sometimes—not restlessly, but serenely, waiting for sleep—the quiet re-establishes itself, piece by piece; all the broken bits, all the fragments of it we've been so busy dispersing all day long. It re-establishes itself, an inward quiet, like the outward quiet of grass and trees. It fills one, it grows—a crystal quiet, a growing expanding crystal. It grows, it becomes more perfect; it is beautiful and terrifying, yes, terrifying as well as beautiful. For one's alone in the crystal and there's nothing external and important, nothing external and trivial to pull oneself up by or to stand on, superiorly, contemptuously, so that one can look down. There's nothing to laugh at or feel enthusiastic about. But the quiet grows and grows. Beautifully and unbearably. And at last you are conscious of something approaching: it is almost a faint sound of footsteps. Something inexpressibly lovely and wonderful advances through the crystal nearer and nearer. And, oh, inexpressibly terrifying. For if it were to touch you, if it were to seize and engulf you, you'd die; all the regular, habitual daily part of you would die. There would be an end of bandstands and whizzing factories, and one would have to begin living arduously in the quiet, arduously in some strange unheard-of manner. Nearer, nearer come the steps; but one can't face the advancing thing. One daren't. It's too terrifying, it's too painful to die. Quickly, before it is too late, start the factory wheels, bang the drum, blow up the saxophone. Think of the women you'd like to sleep with, the schemes for making money, the gossip about your friends, the last outrage of the politicians. Anything for a diversion. Break the silence, smash the crystal to pieces. There, it lies in bits; it is easily broken, hard to build up and easy to break. And the steps? Ah, they were gone at the first flawing of the crystal. And by this time the lovely and terrifying thing is three infinities away, at least. And you lie tranquilly on your bed, thinking of what you'd do if you had ten thousand pounds and of all the fornications you'll never commit."

Truly there lies hidden in the depths of this young satirist a mystic sense of infinite quiet toward which his soul yearns and to which he seems to have given too little ear. One thinks in this connection of young Richard Calamy, a barren leaf, escaping from the lusts of the flesh into the Italian forest to remain until he can come to terms with that Absolute which is troubling his soul. One thinks of Gumbril, Sr., living upon his architectural dreams and quieting his spirit in conversations with the birds. Or of the artist Lypiatt tearing his soul to pieces with self-inflicted torture and yet uttering this:

"Every man is ludicrous if you look at him from outside, without taking into account what's going on in his heart and mind. You could turn Hamlet into an epigrammatic farce with an inimitable scene when he takes his adored mother in adultery. You could make the wittiest Guy de Maupassant short story out of the life of Christ by contrasting the mad rabbi's pretensions with his abject fate. It's a question of the point of view. Every one's a walking farce and a walking tragedy at the same time. The man who slips on a banana skin and fractures his skull describes against the sky, as he falls, the most richly comic arabesque."

Or again there is the young Archimedes, subject of one of Huxley's very best short stories, endowed with a mysterious mathematical genius, for all the world like Plato's slave boy who through apparent reminiscence of another life is able to solve mathematical problems of which he has never heard.

V

But, in spite of all this, Huxley's main characteristic is that of the satirist, of the nature of the greatest of all *revoltés* from an unsatisfactory world, Jonathan Swift. Huxley's own essay is unsuccessful because he has failed to grasp the cause of his quarrel with life. With Swift, rather than with Voltaire, he has most affinity. Both men seem to have accepted the tradition of noble living which we derive from the moral reflection issuing out of the Renaissance, though Swift, living in an age of less confusion, more clearly belongs in that category. Of Huxley we have said enough. Swift too "supposed truth, justice, temperance, and the like to be in every man's power", and that reason could lead to a virtuous and happy existence. Again, "honour, justice, truth, temperance, public spirit, fortitude, chastity, friendship, benevolence, and fidelity" make up the classical-humanistic virtues which Swift applauded, and, while they differ somewhat from Huxley's full-blooded conception of a good life, they may do as a statement of the qualities men should reveal in this life, and do not. Both men have lacked a genuinely effective religion, and their recourse to writing is but a defensive measure against a world that has wounded their souls. They have penetrated too far into the centre of reality, with no sufficient consolation of either art or religion without which one must eventually go mad. This Swift, for reasons too complex for discussion here, did. Huxley seems in no grave danger, but his search for rest, because he seems afraid to trust to the quieter reaches of his nature, has brought little peace to his soul.

In another respect also is Huxley like unto the great Dean. *Brave New World* is his *Gulliver's Travels*, reversed it is true with respect to the conclusion but affording just as effective a relief for over-charged feelings as the other. It is far more than another smart fling at contemporary decadence; it is a genuine catharsis for the soul of the author.

In the year of Ford 692, when the action begins, the world had become completely standardized, happiness had come to all men, and joy and grief, the single-minded search for truth and art and religion had ceased to exist, for these flourish only when life is unstable and men are differentiated from each other. Mr. Cardan, one of the barren leaves, had already commented on the way of Utopias:

> "At some future date, when society is organized in a rational manner so that every individual occupies the position and does the work for which his capacities really fit him, when education has ceased to instil into the minds of the young fantastic prejudices instead of truths, when the endocrine glands have been taught to function in perfect harmony and diseases have been suppressed, all our literature of conflict and unhappiness will seem strangely incomprehensible; and our taste for the spectacle of mental torture will be regarded as an obscene perversion of which decent men should feel ashamed. Joy will take the place of suffering as the principal theme of art; in the process it may be art will cease to exist. A happy people, we now say, has no history; and we might add that happy individuals have no literature."

Well, that state of bliss has now been reached. Children are born and bred scientifically, the word mother has become an obscenity, and by the simple process of conditioning, a child can be moulded into anything one may wish. Five grades of humanity, Alpha to Epsilon, according to the formulas of heredity and environment, take their place in the world, wish for no change, and remain entirely happy. After their day is done, they dine, go to the feelies, and at night indulge in unlimited sexual enjoyment. "Everybody belongs to everybody" is the conditioning slogan they have all learned (within, of course, their own class), and modesty and reserve have long been banished from a happy world. Poetry and imagination and religious yearnings can no longer exist, for no one is ever left alone (although there are strange rites to the great God Ford, after which revivalistic and orgiastic acts occur). If one has individual cravings for uncivilized beauty or solitude, he is sent to an island from which there is no escape. For the rest, there is *soma*, a drug which seems to be a variety of hasheesh with the deleterious effects removed, and everyone chews sex-hormone gum in order to restore his powers for further indulgence.

Into this delightful world an unregenerate Savage is thrust. Born of a mother, he quotes Shakespeare and the Bible, believes in nobility and chastity and beauty and nature; but he comes to a deserved tragic end.

Such is this book, not to be used, as has been the fate of *Gulliver*, as a charming fairy-tale for children, but almost comparable in its devastating power to *Gulliver* itself. Instead of the gentle horses, however, with whom Lemuel Gulliver is content to live, Huxley merely paints an extension of the standardized world we are facing and fearing, a world made safe by science and psychology as they are promoted by the eugenist and the behaviourist. Through this book Huxley would seem to have purged his soul of the dross of irritation and ennui.

What then shall we say of the likelihood that Huxley will find permanent satisfactions in a world which he seems to have so thoroughly rejected? He may remain consistently sceptical of the possibility of untying the knot of universal misery; and if he does, he may become a twentieth-century Swift to his generation, lashing it with the whips of his scorn and contempt, following that supreme master of invective as a prophylactic to his contemporaries. If he does this well, he will do much. He may, however, yield some of his doubt concerning the common bond which unites the hearts of men, which is just as discernible as their disparateness and diversity. That is to say, he may choose to recognize the long and arduous search which the world has made in the direction of realizing certain ideals that no decadent or standardized culture can wholly destroy. Or he may trust more implicitly that hidden mystic sense of unity between himself and the world of absolute values which will finally leave him detached from the repercussions of his own wrath and give him the peace he so evidently yearns for.

In one of these ways Huxley may find his personal salvation — as salvation was defined at the beginning of this study. But whichever way he takes, he is likely to find it necessary to write less, to ponder more, and to detach himself from the thronging irritations which have destroyed his peace of mind. If he chooses to abstract himself from the cynicism and pose and exhibitionism in the midst of which he has lived, and really to study his own nature, he can accomplish something worthy of his brilliant gifts and of paramount value to an age blindly seeking some guide out of the depths of its despair.

REVIEWS

Waldo Frank*

WALDO FRANK's new novel, *The Death and Birth of David Markand*, suffers from the disability that must attach to any novel which is both a piece of fiction and an essay in social criticism. If we are tempted to take it as a story only, then the social criticism fails to make its point, and so is ineffective and adventitious; if it is considered chiefly as social criticism, the novel comes into the realm of fact and the novelist can no longer claim the story-teller's time-honoured immunity against being taken too literally. The disability is increased in Mr. Frank's case by the doubt that must necessarily arise in the reader's mind as to what the author is really talking about – or, for that matter, has been talking about in all his seventeen published books. The prose is brilliant; the detail of any given incident is clear; the architecture is massive if not grand; but the total effect is blurred. It comes to the reader for all the world like one of Admiral Byrd's radio broadcasts. There is a portentous gurgling and moaning, through which a voice speaks haltingly a message that one feels an obligation to be impressed with – but cannot quite catch.

Admiral Byrd is fortunate in having a glib friend at the home station who clarifies matters after the ten or fifteen minutes are up. What Mr. Frank needs is an announcer at the home station to tell us what it is all about. The blurb writer, usually so helpful in interpretation, has failed to supply a sketch of contents. The quotations from critics are not much more enlightening. They evade the issue by saying things like this: "This vast work is full of truth and poetry"; or, "It probes deeply into the human situation behind our economic and social conflicts."

---

* THE DEATH AND BIRTH OF DAVID MARKAND *by Waldo Frank* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.75).

What truth and poetry? What human situation? I do not know how to answer these questions except by relating the bare story, which, as it happens, is largely enacted in the nude, even when inanimate objects are mentioned. For example, "She was a slim figure in the high nude room"; or, "Lois stood in a large room [which was] almost nude save for a wide divan." Elsewhere we read of "a naked electric lamp"; and there are other matters that I forbear to mention – quite startlingly anatomical. But this is the story.

The hero, David Markand, becomes discontented with his business life in an Eastern city, and suddenly walks out, very much as Sherwood Anderson is said to have done on a famous occasion. He begins to wander about the United States. First, however, he puts his investments in charge of an old friend who is also, in some obscure way, a kind of enemy. There are two more preliminaries: he indulges himself briefly with Lois, a former sweetheart; and then, at a casual midnight moment, with his wife, who has found her relief from perplexity by becoming a Catholic. Now David is ready to start; but it is never quite clear whether his perplexities are resolved by amorous adventure or by mingling with the proletariat.

At any rate, though he leaves wife and family behind in the City of Destruction, like a certain former pilgrim, it is not a religious pilgrimage. In his old New England home, David re-inhabits, all alone, the house of his boyhood. His only friends are a Polish family, and an ancient widow, who cooks for him and mothers him. Her son becomes jealous. David is chased out of town by a mob, on the charge of misconduct with the widow. He goes West, to dwell awhile with the wheat farmers of Kansas; here there is a fleeting episode involving a chambermaid who is a drab in the morning and a beauteous witch at night. But the wheat farmers are being exploited by their own farm alliance leaders. He goes to Chicago, where he works in the stockyards. In Chicago he is snatched up by a beautiful Jewish charmer, wife of a stockyard magnate. She carries David off to the Gulf Coast region of the South, where he watches the operations of a "New World School", damns Southern civilization (Negroes excepted), and does heavy reading in the intervals of passion.

As passion grows cold again, this sort of dialogue occurs:

"What are you reading, dear?"
"The Communist Manifesto."

The Gulf Coast plays out, and David comes eastward again, to the hills and mountains of the upland South. He passes by the University of Virginia with his nose in air; he much prefers Negro shacks and mining camps. Now comes his really fruitful friendship.

He meets Byrne, a labour agitator, whose mistress is a girl who has just narrowly escaped the incestuous clutches of her own father. In company with Byrne and Jane he receives the final revelation. Byrne is killed, and Jane is raped and killed by anti-union sympathizers. Markand thinks out a little sermon on the following text: "The world of men is threatened with death because the class of men who rule has died." Apparently David Markand is to be reborn by identifying himself with the "living body of the class which is now life". Of course I have read Mr. Granville Hicks, and I know who that is: the Proletariat. But the rest is not so easy.

To achieve rebirth David performs a kind of sacrament. Wandering into a cheap Negro eating house, he orders a meal, for which he does not pay. Instead of paying, he goes to bed with the mulatto proprietress. Then he gets up and vomits on the floor.

Now that is really obscure. I feel like appealing to Mr. Hicks, Mr. Calverton, or Mr. Wilson for help, but I am afraid they might not wholly approve of this climax. That vomiting on the floor . . . after miscegenation . . . while one is being reborn! Does it mean that David has too much predacious American capitalism in him still, and not enough good old Marxian dialectic? Mr. Frank, the novelist, explains as follows: "He had taken the unpaid meal as a rite. . . . But he had vomited the ceremonial food and was trembling. . . . One does not come to life in a dead body."

So David Markand, whether alive or dead I know not, goes back to the City of Destruction, to his forsaken wife and the child born in his absence, and presumably to his investments. Perhaps he ought to have got rid of the investments, but then he vomited the ceremonial food. There is something mystical and strange here that André Gide, Eduardo Mallea, Reinhold Niebuhr, who praise this book, seem to understand.

I cannot solve the riddle unaided, unless I am allowed to make use of a footnote on the last page, which indicates that the book was written at certain literary retreats in France, Argentina, and New York. From this I infer that the novel is really a fantasy after all. It has nothing much to do with the real people who inhabit the United States, and whom Mr. Frank has merely read about in some of the Sir John Mandeville accounts of American civilization available in any public library. As a fantasy, perhaps it is the kind of novel that Edgar Allan Poe might have written if he had had Mr. Frank's advantages: an expert knowledge of Freud, an acquaintance with Marx (and possibly with Caldwell), and a "world point-of-view".

But this is not said in sheer fun. Mr. Frank is a serious writer, and I propose to take him seriously. The most serious critical observation I can think of is this: it is a pity that Mr. Frank has not chosen to write poetry rather than prose. If he wrote poetry, one would never think of stating the outline of his story so literally, or of asking silly questions. We could then take him as we take Robinson Jeffers, and never bother about any correspondence with material reality. As it stands, Mr. Frank's novel invites too obviously the scrutiny that fictional argument must undergo; and the poetry of it gets neglected.

Yet perhaps I am wrong. Perhaps *The Death and*

Birth of David Markand is the very book which is being read by the rather dark-coloured Proletarian in the last panel of the Orozco frescoes at Dartmouth — the man who is leaving the skyscraper unfinished while he goes in for culture.

DONALD DAVIDSON

Gem of Columbia*

THERE was a time when President Butler made a noise in the world. He helped to make history — academic history, to be sure, but that would seem to be a not inappropriate field for the activities of a university president. What were the rights and wrongs of his once-celebrated quarrel with a group of his professors, I do not know. I fancy there was something to be said on both sides. The troublesome professors, however, were of course defeated and shoved out; the sacred cause of academic freedom took on new life; and the President was called a tyrant. Some journalists, indeed, made quite a good thing out of the episode, and got into the way of referring to Dr. Butler as the Czar Nicholas. This did not hurt the Czar; on the contrary, it helped to make him a Notable Public Figure, while he enjoyed the fruits of victory and has, ever since, easily kept the professors in their place. All the while, too, Columbia was growing in size, in wealth, in prestige. And when Dr. Butler found that everything was going strong, and that administration had settled into a comfortable routine, he naturally began to think he might have a larger mission to fulfil. If the Democrats could put a university president in the White House, why shouldn't the Republicans? Alas, it was not to be, though the Republicans were willing enough to accept other loyal service from the good Doctor.

---

* BETWEEN TWO WORLDS *by Nicholas Murray Butler* (SCRIBNER'S. 450 pp. $3.00).

Thus it was that President Butler came to consider the state of the country: what was wrong with it, and what was needed to make us all healthy, wealthy, and orderly. How much he really thought about these great problems is of course a secret of his inner life; but he talked about them often, and gave out statements to reporters; and by 1917 he had reached such a dizzy height of good repute that he was invited by the *New York Times* to write a series of articles showing just how the nations might achieve a durable peace. Somehow or other, though, the more President Butler talked, the less interested people seemed to be. He showed very clearly that he was not the dictator, at heart, that he had once seemed to be. He was liberal, really, a champion of freedom, one of the original enemies of prohibition, an unsparing critic of stock-gamblers and dishonest financiers, a lover and promoter of peace – in fact a true friend of the people and a man of vision. But it all did no good. The Doctor kept gradually sinking into obscurity, while quite other lights began to shine amidst our gloom. And when, the other day, I was asked, "Who ever listens to Butler any more?" I was at a loss for a reply, until the volume here under review swept within my ken. Now, should the question be asked again, I shall know the answer. The American Club of Paris still listens to President Butler, and the Pilgrims of the United States, and the National Security League, and the National Economy League, and the Institute of Arts and Sciences, and the members of the Parrish Art Museum, at Southampton, Long Island, and the Pilgrims of Great Britain, and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and the League of Nations Association, and the Committee on Finance of the U. S. Senate, and the National Industrial Conference Board, and, of course, the students of Columbia University.

This must make up a good many people, and the list could be lengthened. In fact it may be said that wherever windbags are in demand President Butler is still asked to speak. And what does he tell the various joiners nowadays, and the little ones at Morningside Heights? He says we must all stop thinking of ourselves and begin serving humanity; he believes that governmental expenditure must be curtailed and taxes reduced, that inflation must be avoided, that large corporations must be closely supervised by government, that contributory unemployment and old-age insurance must be put into effect in order "to bring a new sense of comfort and security to millions of our people", and above all that we can overcome the depression only by ceasing to stand apart from other nations, only by promoting international understanding, universal disarmament, and international co-operation. We shall remain badly off, President Butler says,

> . . . until reason overthrows passion, until kindliness displaces hate, until generous concern for the welfare of all men drives out narrow selfishness, and until eyes now so tightly closed are open to the vision of the new day. Then America will be prosperous again and prosperous, let us hope, for ever.

On page 43 President Butler thinks these little changes can all be effected; and here as well as throughout these addresses he appears to be about as blind to the more significant realities of human nature as, for example, Mr. H. G. Wells, though with less to say for himself. Perhaps he seems so very like a Stuffed Shirt because, after all, he occasionally suspects that he has become a mere sounding-board for commonplaces of pious aspiration. At any rate, on page 64 he does remark that "human nature, with all its ebbs and flows, remains substantially the same" as in the age of Pericles or before. And we must in justice remember that before Dr. Butler became a Man of Vision and burdened himself with world-problems he was a shrewd and capable man of business who made Columbia the vulgar but successful educational mill which it now is.

ROBERT SHAFER

A Refuse Incinerator*

WHEN D. H. Lawrence "discovered the seat of human wisdom in the bellies of the Mexican Indians", says Ivor Brown (supplying quotations from Lawrence that make this summary sound flattering), "the highest brow was lowered in adoration of philosophy so daring and profound. Epstein deserted his own genius for graven portraiture in order to cover London with chunks of Mumbo-Jumbo. . . ." Thus at last the Comic Muse awakens to her task of committing to the roaring flames of laughter certain intellectual fads that it has been conventional to greet with uncritical reverence. The very title of Mr. Brown's book is a challenge to the solemn busybodies who are trying to organize us into Boycott Societies to Starve the Germans and Make the World Safe for Decadence (our last unselfish campaign to save the Germans from themselves having proved so successful). *I Commit to the Flames* begins and ends: "Arson is one of the oldest forms of aesthetic criticism. . . . For some kinds of rubbish the incinerator is the only remedy." But there is here no confidence in the effectiveness of physical flames: "Rely on cookery . . . and Marx will prove a salamander yet. . . . Freud will emerge Phoenix-like, from these punitive ashes." "The flames to which I commit the enemy are those of argument, reinforced, I hope, by a little salutary rudeness and by a spark or two of insolent contempt." It might be objected that in this last sentence Brown has committed tautology; anyone who has opposed German-baiting may have noticed that to admirers of Decadence argument itself is considered rude, and the injection of a few facts into the midst of a "liberal" hate-fest is considered proof of "pedantic" contempt for our red and yellow press as a guide to Continental culture.

---

* I COMMIT TO THE FLAMES *by Ivor Brown* (HARPER'S. 240 pp. $2.00).

Ivor Brown lets his opponents damn themselves out of their own mouths. For example, he quotes J. C. Flügel, a professor of psychology at the University of London, who in Mr. Gollancz's *Outline of Modern Knowledge* ("Knowledge, be it noted, not Opinion") has told us that Psycho-analysis shows the Zeppelin to be a phallic symbol, while "dancing . . . and extraction or losing of teeth, correspond to auto-erotic activities".

It is only necessary to turn to Professor Flügel's article to see how neat and how just is Brown's summary: "Anything which keeps you warm is a phallic symbol; therefore the only way to avoid being phallic is to go about stark naked. But in that case you would be a Narcissist or an Exhibitionist . . . these nimble-witted fellows have you either way." Gaiety and acute criticism have not been combined so delightfully for a long time, and after all, wit is the sister of criticism, since both are the daughters of common sense. Brown is not merely an entertainer. Whether at Oxford or as a writer for the *Manchester Guardian*, he has apparently done a great deal more solid thinking than most of the jargon-mongers who are rather noticeable among our professors and our journalists:

> The source of the trouble is a general flight from reason and from the legacy of civilized opinion in which past reason has been embodied. The world increasingly substitutes fisticuffs for argument, flags and symbols for facts and realities, belief in the omnipotence of the subconscious for faith in self-determination of the will by reason guided. It grovels before Negro art; it teaches its children that impulse is divine. Consequently it has no standards, as it certainly has no security. . . . [We have a] disintegration of the will, which is reason in action, by a mass of arbitrary assumptions about the subconscious self. Psycho-analysis may begin with common sense but it ends in a welter of black and beastly magic, perfectly attuned to the swamp-and-jungle values of contemporary art and the knobkerry technique of contemporary politics. . . . The common sense of psycho-analytical doc-

trine can be discovered as easily in Shakespeare or Blake as in the works of any modern professor, with this advantage that it is decently written and free of nonsensical additions. . . . When Shakespeare . . . wrote in magnificent phrase about "the huge army of the world's desires" he was thinking at least as much of "Fame, whom all hunt after in their lives", as of lasses and lads in mutual pursuit. Behind his major work sex lurks by right, since so it lurks in life. But *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Lear* are tragedies of nerve, will, and temper in their combat with duty, sovereignty, and ambition.

One is tempted to continue listing very quotable bits about Psycho-analysis, the renewed cult of the Noble Savage, the sentimentality of D. H. Lawrence who "gingered up that music-hall favourite, the 'Dear Old Mammy o' Mine' stuff, by mixing it up in a horrible emotional stew with the fag-ends of Freudian jargon and by dumping in Old Man Oedipus as the onion in this hotpot". The cheerful, purifying sunlight of ridicule is allowed to play upon other products of intellectual decay: Buchmanism, "hard poetic logic", Mass-Dictatorship, the taste for cruelty pandered to by movies and fictioneers, jazz played by writhing Calibans, and behind them all that Rousseauistic betrayal of our education which some ironic genius has labelled "progressive". Educational theory has gone from one silly extreme to another; from a philosophy that could be summed up in, "Go and see what the boy is doing and tell him not to", to the new idiocy that says, "Go and see what the boy is doing and tell him to carry on":

> Educational theory has naturally been annexed by the opponents of reason and will. One of our modernists has

recently announced that the first purpose of education is to keep children from thinking and any discipline which stimulates the will is regarded as a stupid brutality.

Victor Hugo prophesied that social salvation would come from free compulsory education, asking "How long will it take?" and answering: "A quarter of a century; and then imagine the incalculable sum of intellectual development. . . . Look! raise your eyes! the supreme epic is accomplished." We look, we raise our eyes – and see the sex rot of movie magazines "the popular reading-matter of the time, the culture of the enfranchised democracy of the twentieth century". "It is unlikely that *Othello* had to be marketed for the consumption of the groundlings with much trumpeting about ape-men, sheikhs, and stark, primitive passion."

It will be noticed that Brown is not engaged in that easiest and safest of the sports enjoyed by the intelligentsia: ridiculing the culture of those who make no claim to culture. He is judging the civilization of those who do claim to be civilized, and the culture of those who do pride themselves on their culture; and after all it is the latter who are responsible for our "huge mechanism of a chattery-smattery culture whose main result seems to be bosh in widest commonalty spread":

> It is a commonplace that the person most easy to deceive is the recipient of a higher education which has failed to be sufficiently high. The schooling system of Europe and America had just reached the stage at which it was creating the pseudo-intellectual in very considerable numbers. This type had learned to use long words and it was extremely partial to regarding as new and vital and

immensely exciting any ideas which were as old as the hills or totally discredited by intelligence. The condition of accepting those ideas was their arrival in a mist of pretentious terminology. . . . Thus the semi-schooled simpleton, who might have been a little shocked if a Communist announced that he had just shot another old farmer, was deeply impressed by the news that some more bourgeois ideology had been liquefied.

JOSEPH E. BAKER

Two Portraits of Erasmus*

STEFAN ZWEIG, having ranged widely over the field of popular biography from studies of three mental healers, of three masters of literature, of three adepts in self-portraiture to monographs on Joseph Fouché and Marie Antoinette, here takes Erasmus in his stride. The late Professor Allen, on the other hand, was an Erasmian specialist. Head of an Oxford college, he made Erasmus his scholarly hobby, and his great edition of the *Epistolae* made him one of the outstanding Erasmian authorities of our time. His widow, who was his able collaborator in his chosen avocation during his lifetime, is the editor of this posthumous book.

It must be admitted at the outset that the two books are not readily susceptible of comparison with each other. They belong to totally different categories. The one is a highly dramatic story of a man's life, while the other is a collection of addresses given by a specialist. Professor Allen was always cognizant of the current interest in Erasmus, and his first essay in this book is a series of replies to the question: What did Erasmus do to make us so vitally interested in him today? Against all this, the Zweig book opens with the statement that Erasmus, the greatest and most brilliant star of his century, is today hardly more than a name. Those of our readers who are familiar with Christopher Hollis's critical monograph and with Dr. Mangan's authoritative two volumes on Erasmus will be inclined to balk at the Zweig opening. But its significance is quite plain. It means that Zweig wants to start with a *tabula rasa*. He would have a clean canvas for his portrait of Erasmus, and refuses to be disturbed by the many problems which the erudite student of the sixteenth century finds in the life of this Hollander who became a citizen of the world.

---

* ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM *by Stefan Zweig* (VIKING PRESS. 247 pp. $3.00).
ERASMUS: Lectures and Wayfaring Addresses *by P. S. Allen* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 216 pp. $5.00).

Having set up his easel, Zweig turns to the audience and gets rid of more than one other difficulty. In the second sentence of his book he relieves himself of almost all of the labour of evaluating the literary works of Erasmus; he tells us that Erasmus's numerous works, written in an obsolete supra-national tongue (the Latin of the humanists) sleep undisturbed upon the shelves of libraries and that hardly a single one of them has any message for our epoch. So we are not surprised to find that, in the course of his book, Zweig expounds only one of the works of Erasmus, the *Praise of Folly*. Nor are we astonished to discover that there is no effort to discuss the lucid and flexible style of a man who, throughout most of his life, employed Latin for his thinking and speaking and writing.

Before Zweig comes to the end of the first page of his book he manages to get rid of yet a third difficulty. It seems that he finds little to tell his readers about Erasmus's private affairs, "for a man who leads a retired and extremely busy intellectual life scarcely lends himself to description, and is, therefore, a meagre subject for the biographer". After reading those words we give up all hope of a solution of the many vexed questions as to what manner of man Erasmus really was. That he may have been cowardly, vacillating, selfish, petty-minded in things affecting his own comfort, querulous, ungrateful; that he may have been a neurasthenic, as Mangan represents him, or that he may have indulged in dangerous friendships with younger men, as Hollis seems to suggest — all this has nothing to do with Zweig's portrait of him. The factual basis of charges of this kind does not interest him.

In order that his readers may get a complete portrait of what Zweig calls "the great and forgotten man" our author gives us this picture of him which follows:

> Erasmus of Rotterdam was, of all the writers and creators of the West, the first conscious European, the first to fight on behalf of peace, the ablest champion of the humanities and of a spiritual ideal. The tragedy of his life was that he sustained defeat in the struggle for a juster and more harmonious shaping of our mental world.

Now, to call a great man "the first conscious European" is simply a rhetorical trick. Charlemagne and

Henry of Navarre, to mention but two among many, have been accorded something of the same gracious title. Zweig is on safer ground when he discusses his hero as the philosopher of pacifism, and his most stirring pages are those wherein he depicts Erasmus as the man who saw visions and dreamed dreams of universal peace among the nations of the world. Unfortunately, he prefers declamation to an exposition of the evidence. That the pacifist Erasmus refused to edit a war book like Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* is hardly worth noticing, and even the briefest of analyses of the famous *Complaint of Peace* is lacking from the book.

Despite faults in proportion of this kind, there is a strikingly dramatic quality in the Zweig portrait, a quality nowhere more evident than in the masterly contrast which our author draws between Erasmus and Luther. Against a richly coloured background he depicts the student and the warrior, the man of thought and the man of action, the anaemic scholar and the lusty son of thunder. Zweig believes, of course, that Luther was victorious in the famous controversy. What he fails to see is that the publication of Erasmus's *On Free Will* was the first really decisive blow that hurt Luther. It definitely divorced the humanists from the Lutheran movement, which was further weakened by the death of the Elector Frederick and by the Peasants' War. Henceforth Luther was forced to realize that his gospel could be established only on a basis afforded by the secular authority. During his own lifetime, his masterful energy was sufficient to postpone the emergence of the evils inherent in such dependence. But after his death his

State-Church was not slow in manifesting its natural tendencies to fall into a condition of subservience to the civil power.

By way of an addendum at the end, Zweig gives us a thoughtful chapter on the legacy which Erasmus has left us. This final chapter does much to restore the book's balance, disturbed as it is by the torrential prose that inundates most of the volume. Regretting that the Erasmic ideal has failed and that our political order today rests on the Machiavellian principle of force, he gives us this excellent summary of the intellectual elements that constituted the background of Erasmus's teaching on the possibility of world peace:

> Erasmus, the philosopher contemplating the world, held, as did Aristotle, Plato, and Thomas Aquinas, that politics should be placed in the same category as ethics; the prince, as the leader of the State, should first of all be the servant of the divine, the exponent of the ethical ideal.

This is the classical teaching, the teaching which was the very foundation on which the civilization of the West was built. In his political doctrines Erasmus was drawing, not on his own conciliatory genius, but on his heritage from the philosophy of the past.

To turn from Zweig's high colours to the more sober study by Professor Allen, we find that here a carefully detailed line-picture of Erasmus is drawn by one who had made himself master of all the available facts. Erasmus is presented as the schoolmaster of Europe, the patient scholar who saw, more clearly than any man of his time, the full value of the historical moment when the age of manuscripts began to give way to the age of printed books. His principal works are carefully analyzed, the *Adagia* and the famous translation of the New Testament being examined in adequate detail. But the character of Erasmus is presented as that of a saint among scholars, a peerless knight of learning *sans peur et sans reproche*. This is scarcely to be accounted more than a minor fault in one who, like the late Professor Allen, devoted more than forty years of his life to serve the name of Erasmus.

To maintain the intellectual balance, the two books ought to be read, one after the other. Zweig's lofty disregard of the factual values of Erasmus's life will thus be corrected, while the Allen book will be vitalized for the reader by the brilliant word-painting with which Zweig presents some salient features of the life of his subjects. In the end the sage of Rotterdam, the timid, sickly student who loved books and who hated the tumult of controversy, will probably remain as shadowy and as elusive a being as he was in the days of that sixteenth century when Europe was aflame.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

The Influence of The Westminster*

MR. NESBITT'S title, *Benthamite Reviewing*, seems a trifle unfortunate. It conveys very little meaning, even to a person well versed in early nineteenth-century English history and literature, and it has about it an air of specialization which is likely to discourage a general reader. Yet his little book is written in a most unacademic style and tells a story which should interest a fairly considerable public. As the subtitle indicates, we have here a history of the early life of the *Westminster Review*, the philosophical ideas which gave shape to its policy, and the personalities who gave that policy expression.

---

* BENTHAMITE REVIEWING: The First Twelve Years of the Westminster Review, 1824-1836 *by George L. Nesbitt* (COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS. 208 pp. $2.75).

We are first given an excellent chapter on the state of English journalism during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, a chapter which succeeds in making vivid the peculiar intensity of feeling which was then concentrated on political matters, an intensity of feeling comparable only to that of Fascists or Communists in our own day, and more extreme than that which we usually associate with the word "politics". Thus we find the literary judgements of the *Edinburgh* or the *Quarterly* deeply coloured by the political principles of the Reviews. The *Edinburgh*, strongly Whig, can for instance find no merit in the poetry of Southey after he openly became a Tory; in 1807 its editor, the "notorious" Jeffrey, explains that his literary enmity toward Wordsworth "sprang from 'a sense of public duty' ", because Wordsworth was a political revolutionary, a variety of person fully as obnoxious to a good Whig as the rankest Tory could ever aspire to be. There seems to have been very little attempt made to judge works of literature on any basis except the political views or affiliations of the writer under consideration. Naturally this kind of criticism often degenerated into mere personalities, into saying that the author is no gentleman.

As one reads Mr. Nesbitt's first chapter, however, one cannot help wondering whether it is not natural that "politics" should colour literary judgement. Is it not possible that, if Wordsworth were writing now, some editor who disapproved of his philosophy might be moved to criticize him from a sense of public duty? To one who has gone through the files of the *Edinburgh* for the entire period of Jeffrey's editorship, Mr. Nesbitt's implied strictures on the political bias of the early reviewers seems a trifle hard. What we call the "political" issues of the early nineteenth century were, after all, very important matters, rather more important than the issues between our own Democrats and Republicans; after all much closer, in importance, to the issues today between Communist and Christian, between Parliamentary Democracy and Fascism. Professor Nesbitt's attitude here savours just a little of art for art's sake, of the necessity for judging a poet merely on the ground of "literary" merit or demerit, and without relation to the truth or untruth of the poet's ideas.

The second chapter of *Benthamite Reviewing* introduces us to Jeremy Bentham himself and to the coterie of men he had attracted to his views during the first decades of the century. The nature of Bentham's Utilitarianism is too well known to warrant extensive summary; indeed its fruits are still with us. As Mr. Nesbitt several times points out, it is a tribute to the success of Utilitarianism that many of of its most radical doctrines seem to us either conservative or merely commonplace. Thus the Benthamite economic ideal of complete freedom for business and the removal of all governmental, or artificial, restrictions on the free and natural working out of the economic process, which in its own day, scarcely more than a century ago, was considered rank radicalism, is today the accepted doctrine of any "solid" business man.

In 1824 the aged Bentham decided that the time had come to start a Review, the purpose of which should be the wider diffusion of his views and of the views of those associated with him. It was an extraordinarily able group. Apart from the Prophet himself, there was James Mill and his son, John Stuart Mill, John Cam Hobhouse, Dr. Southwood Smith, Thomas Jefferson Hogg, Thomas Love Peacock, and a number of others whose names are only less well known today. The choice of the Editor was a little unfortunate, for it carried in it the seeds of the separation of the Mills from the *Westminster*, which came quite early in the career of the Review. The elder Mill should have been selected, but his employment at conservative India House made this impossible. So the direction of the new Review was entrusted to John (later Sir John) Bowring, a gentleman whose somewhat picturesque personality irritated the Mills. The first number of the *Westminster* appeared in January, 1824, and was a great success. About three thousand copies were sold, at the then usual price of six shillings—a price so high that a single copy would be bought and passed around among far more readers than is common today.

The *Westminster*, however, was too heavy to achieve any great financial success, however much it may have helped to mould the culture of its times. Within four years the original capital supplied by

Bentham – four thousand pounds – had been used up, and some new source of support had to be found. The Mills proposed taking the Review over, but the Editor, Bowring, whom they would have insisted upon dropping, succeeded in finding a new supporter, and the Mills, accusing him of duplicity, refused to have anything more to do with the Review. From 1828 to 1836 Bowring continued to preach the doctrines of Bentham undefiled. Yet somehow they had ceased to be quite as exciting as they had been when freshly offered.

Bentham and James Mill died; John Stuart Mill progressed from pure Benthamism into a less extreme position; he even began to have doubts about the efficacy of Democracy. Finally, in 1834, he established a new radical review, the *London*, and in 1836 it absorbed the *Westminster*. The combined papers continued to lose money. At last the *London and Westminster* was sold (1840), became once more the *Westminster*, and continued as a "sound, respectable journal with liberal and intellectualist tendencies" until 1914.

We have all heard of the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*, both papers of wide circulation for their day. It was high time that the *Westminster* should receive adequate treatment. Mr. Nesbitt has certainly accomplished this. Here we may see displayed before us the beginning of so many characteristically modern ideas – the equality of women, the cult of the useful, the "march of mind", free competition, free trade, democracy, reform – that we must be deeply grateful for this new chapter in intellectual history. And it would be ungracious in any review not to commend

Mr. Nesbitt for the admirable way in which his material is presented. His text has been kept to a minimum in length; his arrangement for the notes, appendices, bibliography, and index deserves praise for its simplicity and inconspicuous usefulness.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, of THE AMERICAN REVIEW, published 10 times a year at Camden, New Jersey, for October 1, 1934. State of New York, County of New York, ss. Before me, a notary public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Marvin McCord Lowes, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the business manager of THE AMERICAN REVIEW, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Seward Collins, 218 Madison Avenue, New York City; Editor, Seward Collins, 218 Madison Avenue, New York City; Managing Editor, None. Business Manager, Marvin McCord Lowes, 218 Madison Avenue, New York City.

2. That the owner is: Bookman Publishing Company, Incorporated, 218 Madison Avenue, New York City; Seward Collins, 218 Madison Avenue, New York City.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

(Signed) MARVIN MCCORD LOWES,
Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 28th day of September, 1934.

HARRY F. SCHWENK. ***Notary Public.***
[SEAL] **(My commission expires March 30, 1936.)**